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# AŚVAGHOṢA

By

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# PREFACE

An attempt has been made in this treatise to build up a connected account of the life and labours of Aśvaghoṣa who was one of the most distinguished poets, born and brought up in the Theravāda tradition, from the available materials. It is indeed an arduous task to prepare a useful compendium of what we yet know of Aśvaghoṣa both from his own works and from other relative documents. Aśvaghoṣa was the celebrated author of two poetical works called the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* and a drama known by the name of *Śāriputra-Prakaraṇa*. The first chapter gives a brief survey of his writings and the researches so far made about Aśvaghoṣa and his works. The second chapter forms an estimate of him as a man. The third chapter treats of his poetical works, and makes an attempt to show his poetical genius from his own compositions. The fourth chapter is devoted to a careful comparison of his views as a teacher with those given in Theravāda Buddhist books. It also deals with the part played by him as a teacher. The fifth and the last chapter shows his masterly power of delineation of human characters and objects of nature. It must be admitted that many knotty points of Buddhist philosophy and many important terms of Buddhist doctrine received lucid treatment at his hands. Many other important points connected with the history of Aśvaghoṣa, as for example, his knowledge of Sāṃkhya and Yoga practices, have also been treated in this book. Several theories have cropped up about this great poet, which have been discussed and discarded as they rest on a more or less slender basis of evidence. I have tried to utilize fully his works as well as the other documents that furnish any information regarding him.

This treatise is, I believe, the first of its kind. It supplies some new historical data and presents some new aspects of the problems concerning Aśvaghoṣa. The importance of Aśvaghoṣa as a poet and teacher has generally been discussed from the Brahmanical point of view. But I have tried to show here that the Brahmanical side of his *kāvyas* was of secondary importance. This was brought in just to serve as the historical background of his own faith or as a means of embellishing his poetical delineations.

It is for the scholars interested in the subject to judge how far I have succeeded in presenting a readable account of the celebrated poet. I am thankful to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal for including it in their newly started Monograph Series.

CALCUTTA,
43 Kailas Bose Street,
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BIMALA CHURN LAW.

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## Chapter I

# AŚVAGHOṢA AND HIS WRITINGS

The life and work of Aśvaghoṣa, one of India's master-minds, are well worth a systematic study. The sources of this study are three-fold, viz. Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan. Among the pioneers who dealt with this subject we must mention the name of Samuel Beal who published an English translation of the *Buddhacarita* from the Chinese in 1883.[1] He was followed by Cowell who published the first edition of the Sanskrit text of the same work[2] and also an English translation in the Sacred Books of the East Series.[3] Teitaro Suzuki's critical examination of the Chinese and Tibetan traditions in the introduction to his English translation of the *Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda-śāstra* from the Chinese[4] and Haraprasād Śāstrī's edition of the Sanskrit text of the *Saundarananda-kāvya*[5] have given a further impetus to the study of Aśvaghoṣa. Johnston in the introduction to his English translation of the *Buddhacarita*[6] has carefully discussed and faithfully stated Aśvaghoṣa's writings, religious views, talents and eminence. The contents of the Chinese translation of a work of which the Sanskrit title was taken to be *Sūtrālaṅkāra* were only imperfectly known. Samuel Beal's representation of select tales therefrom before the publication of an excellent translation by E. Hüber in 1908[7] is worthy of notice. The Bengali translation of the *Saundarananda* published by me in 1922 was the first translation made of the work in any language.[8] To F. Weller we owe the publication in 1923 of the Tibetan text of the *Buddhacarita* (Cantos I–VIII, IX–XVII) with its German translation, *Das Leben des Buddha von Aśvaghoṣa.**

Among the scholars who have contributed most to the study of the subject from different points of view since the time of Samuel Beal, the name of Böhtlingk[9] stands foremost. He has been followed by such great French, German, British, Japanese, American, Dutch, Belgian, Italian and Russian Indologists as Sylvain Levi, Kielhorn, Speyer, Winternitz, Windisch I,[10] Leumann, Lüders, Jacobi, F. W. Thomas, Keith, Gurner, Byodo, Anesaki, Kimura, Hopkins, Kern, Poussin, Windisch II,[11] Strauss, Schrader,[12] Hultzsch, Formichi,[13] Gawronski, Wassiljew,[14] Cappeller,

[1] The *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsang-King*, *SBE*, Vol. XIX.

[2] The *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa (*Anecdota Oxoniensia*, 1893).

[3] Vol. XLIX, 1894.

[4] Published in 1900 under the title Aśvaghoṣa's *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.

[5] *Bibliotheca Indica series*, Re-issue, 1939—First published in 1910.

[6] *Punjab University Oriental publications* No. 32, 1936, pp. xiii–xcviii.

[7] *Sūtrālaṃkāra traduit en français sur la version chinoise de Kumārjīva* par ed. Hüber, Paris, 1908; cf. Louis de la Valee Poussin, *Le Museon*, N.S., X, 1909, 86 foll.

[8] Published by Gurudas Chatterjee & Sons—First Ed. (1922) and Second Ed. (1923).

[9] Author of *Kritische Bemerkungen Zu Aswaghoṣa's Buddhacarita* (1894).

[10] Author of *Māra und Buddha* (1895).

[11] Author of *Buddha's Geburt und die Lehre Von der seelenwanderung* (1908).

[12] Author of *Nachlese Zu Aśwaghoṣa's Buddhacarita* (Taisho University Journal, 1930).

[13] Author of *Aśwaghoṣa, poeta del Buddhismo* (1912).

[14] Author of *Der Buddhismus* (St. Petersburg, 1860).

Schmidt, Wohlgemuth [1] and Balmont. Among Indian scholars who have contributed to the subject mention may be made of Joglekar, Lokur, Nandargikar, Pandeya Jagannatha Prasada, Sovani, Bhandari and Sukumar Sen.[2]

The latest editions and translations of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* are due to Johnston whose untimely death has snatched away from our midst a sound Sanskritist of balanced mind and weighty judgment.

The Chinese Tripiṭaka contains translations of eight different works, all ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa and these are listed by Suzuki as follows [3]:—

(i) *Tai shêng ch'i hsin lun : Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, translated into English by Teitaro Suzuki under the title of '*Aśvaghoṣa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*';
(ii) *Ta sung ti hsüan wên pên lun:*[4] A fundamental treatise on the spiritual stages for reaching final deliverance;
(iii) *Ta chuang yen lun ching: Mahālaṅkārasūtra-śāstra*, better *Sūtrālaṅkāra-mahāśāstra*;[5]
(iv) *Fo shü hing tsan : Buddhacarita-kāvya*;
(v) *Ni kan tzŭ wên wu wu i ching:*[6] A sūtra on a Nirgrantha's asking about the theory of non-ego;
(vi) *Shi pu shan yeh tao ching :* A sūtra on the ten no-good deeds;
(vii) *Shi shih fa wu shin sung :* Fifty verses on the rules of serving a master or teacher; and
(viii) *Lu tao lun 'hui ching :* A sūtra on transmigration through the six states of existence.

According to Bunyiu Nanjio's Catalogue of the Chinese translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, Aśvaghoṣa (lit. a horse neighing) is the author of six works:—

(1) *Fifty verses on the rules for serving a teacher.* [7]
(2) *Sūtrālaṅkāra-śāstra.* [8]
(3) *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra.* [9]
(4) *Mahāyānabhūmiguhyavācāmūla-śāstra.* [10]
(5) *Buddhacarita-kāvya,* [11] and
(6) *Daśaduṣṭakarmamārga-sūtra.* [12]

There is another work by the name of *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra* translated by Paramārtha. Towards the end of this śāstra Aśvaghoṣa

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[1] Author of *Ueber die chinesische version von Aśwaghoṣa's Buddhacarita* (1916).

[2] Author of *The language of Aśwaghoṣa's Saundarananda-kāvya* (*JPASB*, N.S., XXVI 1920) and On the *Buddhacarita of Aśwaghoṣa* (*IHQ*, 1926). Vide bibliographical lists of authors and their books and articles supplied by Johnston in his edition of the *Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, pp. vii–ix and by Mr. Chintaharan Chakravartty in the re-issue (1939) of H. P. Śāstrī's Ed. of the *Saundarananda-kāvya*, pp. 11–13.

[3] Suzuki, *Aśvaghoṣa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, pp. 36ff.

[4] This book has a decided tendency to mysticism explaining a gradual development of religious consciousness through fifty-one different spiritual stages, Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[5] The book of Great Glory or a compilation of stories illustrating the retribution of *karma*, *ibid.*, p. 37.

[6] The book foreshadows the Mādhyamika philosophy of Nāgārjuna, *ibid.*, p. 38.

[7] No. 1080.

[8] No. 1112.

[9] No. 1249–50.

[10] No. 1299.

[11] No. 1351.

[12] No. 1379—Appendix I, p. 369.

quotes a sūtra (probably the *Amitāyus sūtra* or *Sukhāvatī-vyūha*) on Buddha Amitāyus or Amitābha and his Buddhakshetra Sukhāvatī (p. 274).

According to Dr. F. W. Thomas,[1] the following are the works attributed to Aśvaghoṣa:

(1) *Buddhacarita-kāvya.*
(2) *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa*, a play, fragment published by Prof. H. Lüders.[2]
(3) *Saundarananda-kāvya* edited by Haraprasād Śāstrī.
(4) *Gaṇḍi-stotra.*
(5) *Vajrasūcī* edited with translation by Weber.

Those attributed to him in Tibetan are the following:—

(1) *Aṣṭavighna-kathā* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xciv, foll. 206–10).
(2) *Gaṇḍistotra-gāthā* (Tanjur, *Bstod* foll. 210*b*-214*a*).
(3) *Daśakuśalakarmapathanirdeśa* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xciv foll. 271–3).
(4) *Paramārthabodhicitta-bhāvanākramavarṇasaṃgraha* (Tanjur, *Bstod*, xxxiii, foll. 145-6).
(5) *Buddhacarita-mahākāvya* (Tanjur, *Bstod*, xciv, foll. 1–119).
(6) *Maṇidīpamahākāruṇikadevapañcastotra* (Tanjur, *Rgyud*, lxviii, foll. 157-8).
(7) *Vajrayānamūlapattisaṃgraha* (Tanjur, *Rgyud*, xlviii, 219*b*-220*b*).
(8) *Śatapañcaśatakanāma-stotra* (Tanjur, *Bstod*, foll. 129*a*-136*b*).
(9) *Śokavinodana* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xciv, foll. 270-1).
(10) *Saṃvṛtibodhicittabhāvanopadeśavarṇasaṃgraha* (Tanjur, *Mdo* xxxiii, foll. 146-7), and
(11) *Sthūlapatti* (Tanjur, *Rgyud*, xlviii, foll. 220*b*-221*a*).

In the Chinese Life of Aśvaghoṣa he is honoured with the epithet of Kung-tê-jih meaning Puṇyāditya (?), and with that of Kung-chang (Puṇyaśrī?) in another work called *Fo tsou t'ung tsai* or *The Record of Buddha and the Patriarchs.* The Tibetan historian Tārānātha, on the other hand, applies nine more epithets to him, viz. Kāla, Dūrdarśa, Dūrdarśakāla, Mātṛceta, Pitṛceta, Śūra, Dhārmika-Subhūti, and Maticitra.[3] The confusing character of the Chinese and Tibetan traditions led Kern even to opine that 'Aśvaghoṣa was not an historical man, but a personification of Kāla, a form of Śiva'.[4]

We are here concerned with Aśvaghoṣa who is definitely known as the author of the *Buddhacarita*, the *Saundarananda-kāvya* and the *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa.* According to *Si-yu-ki*, Aśvaghoṣa lived in a monastery and he preached so eloquently that the entire congregation was moved to tears.[5] His wisdom embraced all subjects and he discoursed on the minute details of the three piṭakas and referred to the principle of five *vidyās.*[6] I-tsing who came to India in A.D. 671–95 refers to Aśvaghoṣa as one of the great teachers of the past and asserts that his works were studied in his time.[7] Tārānātha speaks of three Aśvaghoṣas and distinguishes them as 'the great one', 'the younger' and 'one who was also called Śūra'. In Beal's opinion the first of them was the Bodhisattva Aśvaghoṣa and the author of the

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[1] Introduction to the *Kavīndravacanasamuccaya*, *Bibliotheca Indica Series*, No. 1309, pp. 25–27.

[2] Sitzungsberichte der k. preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, 1911, xvii; cf. K. preuss. Turfan Expeditionen, Kleinere Sanskrit-texte, Heft i, Berlin, 1911.

[3] Suzuki, *Aśvaghoṣa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, p. 21; *Geschichte des Buddhismus*, p. 90.

[4] *Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien*, Leipzig, 1884, Vol. ii, p. 464.

[5] Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, I, p. 57.

[6] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 100–101.

[7] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 55.

*Buddhacarita.*[1] In a commentary on Aśvaghoṣa's *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra* ascribed to Nāgārjuna, it is claimed, on the other hand, that 'there were six Aśvaghoṣas at different times, to fulfil the prophecy of Buddha', Nāgārjuna himself being a disciple of Aśvaghoṣa on whose work he wrote the commentary.[2] The Chinese and Tibetan traditions, taken together, refer to two Aśvaghoṣas, one the Bodhisattva Aśvaghoṣa converted to Buddhism by Āryadeva, and the other converted by Pārśva or Pārśva's disciple called Puṇyayaśa.[3] These traditions connect Aśvaghoṣa with the Brahmanical tradition and suggest his contemporaneity with a Kaniṣka.

With regard to the date, country and other important particulars of the personal history of Aśvaghoṣa, traditions vary. According to a Sarvāstivāda tradition quoted in the Chinese work called *Li tai san pao chi* (fas. 1), Aśvaghoṣa Bodhisattva, the author of the *Mahā-sūtrālaṅkāra-śāstra* translated by Kumārajīva in A.D. 405, was 'born some three hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*'. Hui-Yuen in his commentary on the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitāśāstra* places the date of Aśvaghoṣa's birth about three hundred and seventy years after the *Nirvāṇa* on the authority of Kumārajīva. *The Life of Vasubandhu* mentions Aśvaghoṣa as a contemporary of Kātyāyana (evidently the author of the *Jñānaprasthāna-śāstra*) who lived in the fifth century after the *Nirvāṇa*. In the preface to the second Chinese translation of the *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, Aśvaghoṣa is counted among the four suns of the Buddhists and is said to have appeared in the world five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. According to Hiuen Tsang he was a contemporary of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and Kumāralabdha. Hiuen Tsang calls these contemporaries as the four suns which illumined the world.[4] Sang-Ying, the Chinese translator of the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra*, too, places the date of Aśvaghoṣa 'towards the end of the period of orthodoxy' meaning 500 years after the *Nirvāṇa*. The *Fu tsou't'ung chi* (Vol. V) records a prophecy put into the mouth of the Tathāgata as to the transmission of the Dharma to Aśvaghoṣa six hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*, which is adopted as if it were an unquestionable fact by Fa-tsang, a learned commentator of the *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*. Keith says[5] that Aśvaghoṣa knew Prajñāpāramitā doctrine. If he was really the author of the *Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda-sūtra*, then we must assume that the doctrine of idealism developed effectively before that of vacuity (*śūnyatā*). Keith is of opinion that such an assumption seems contrary to tradition and to probability,[6] although the doctrine was elaborated into a very complex system of thought which was distinctly influenced by the Brahmanical Absolute.[7]

As regards the author of the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda*, Winternitz thinks that it cannot possibly have been written by the poet of the *Buddhacarita*. It must remain an open question whether it was attributed to the great poet or whether there was an Aśvaghoṣa II in about the fifth century who wrote this philosophical work which gives ample proof of an advanced stage of the development of Mahāyāna philosophy.[8]

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[1] Beal, *Fo-sho-Hing-Tsan-king*, intro., p. xxxi.
[2] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, pp. 6ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 2ff.
[4] Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, II, 302ff; cf. Beal, *The Life of Hiuen Tsang*, p. 199—Aśvaghoṣa flourished in the east, Deva in the south, Nāgārjuna in the west, and Kumārajīva in the north. These were called four suns able to enlighten all that lived.
[5] *JRAS*, 1914, p. 1092.
[6] *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 228.
[7] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 493.
[8] *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, Calcutta University, p. 362; R. Kimura, *Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna*, 1927, pp. 41, 180 foll.

According to Beal, the date of Aśvaghoṣa is uncertain. He was the contemporary of Nāgārjuna who is generally placed 400 years after the Buddha. It will not be wrong if he is placed in the first century B.C.[1]

As to Aśvaghoṣa's birthplace, the Chinese traditions in two works, the *Record of the Triratna* and the *Accounts of Buddha and the Patriarchs*, agree with Tārānātha in referring it to eastern India. The *Life of Vasubandhu* represents Aśvaghoṣa as 'a native of Bhāṣita in Śrāvastī,' while Nāgārjuna in his *Mahāyānaśāstra-vyākhyā* connects him with western India. This is not all. In the *Record of Buddha and Patriarchs under successive Dynasties*, Aśvaghoṣa, the twelfth patriarch, is called a native of Benares, while in yet another Chinese work, the Shittanzo (fas. 1) he is made 'a man of south India'.

Another group of traditions seeks to establish the contemporaneity of one Aśvaghoṣa of great intellectual powers and an exponent of Buddhism with a king of the smaller Yüeh-chi country (i.e. Tukhāra) in north India (Uttarāpatha) who was known by the name of Chan-tan-chi-ni-cha'a. This name is usually Sanskritized as Chandana Kaniṣka, although Suzuki is inclined also to equate it with Chandana Kaniṣṭha (or Kanīta ?). Fā-hien, the earlier Chinese pilgrim, represents Kaniṣka (whose name is transliterated into Chinese *Chi-ni-chia*, corresponding to Sanskrit Kaṇika) 'as if a different person from the king of Yüeh-chih who invaded Gandhāra to get the Buddha-bowl'.[2] With Tārānātha, too, Kaṇika and Kaniṣka 'are not the same king, the former being that of Tili and Mālava, while the latter that of Jālandhara'.[3] According to a Tibetan tradition, Aśvaghoṣa, 'a Mahāyāna priest who held a prominent position in northern countries' was an elder contemporary of Kaniṣka, 'king of Palhāva and Delhi,' who flourished four hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. Here Jñānayaśa finds mention as a leading disciple of Aśvaghoṣa.[4] And on the strength of the tradition in the Chinese *Tsa pao tsang ching* (*Saṃyuktaratnapiṭaka-sūtra* ?) the court of king Kaniṣka is believed to have been adorned by three wise men, viz. a Bodhisattva called Aśvaghoṣa, a minister of State called *Mo-cha-la* (Māṭhara) and an experienced physician called Caraka, who was the well-known author of the *Carakasaṃhitā*.[5] In the Chinese work called *Fu-fo-tsan-ch'uan* (*Transmission of the Dharmapiṭaka*, fas. 5), Aśvaghoṣa is said to have been taken by king Kaniṣka from Pāṭaliputra to his capital, Gandhāra, in the north-west of India.

The Life of Aśvaghoṣa accords to the Sthavira Pārśva who resided in north India (Uttarāpatha) the credit of converting Aśvaghoṣa to the Buddhist faith, while according to the *Transmission of the Dharmapiṭaka*, this is due to Pārśva's disciple called Puṇyayaśa. Aśvaghoṣa who remained in central India (better, middle country), making an extensive study of the *Sūtras*, seeking a clear comprehension of the doctrine, Buddhistic as well as non-Buddhistic, was treated by the ruler of the place as a man of distinction. Hiuen Tsang represents the Sthavira Pārśva as a religious preceptor to Kaniṣka, king of Gandhāra, who reigned four hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. He is mentioned also as a great contemporary and colleague of Vasumitra under whose presidentship a Sarvāstivāda or Hīnayāna Council was held in Kāśmīra.[6]

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[1] *Romantic Legend of the Śākya Buddha*, vii, f.n.

[2] Legge, *Fā-hien*, pp. 33ff.

[3] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–15; p. 15 f.n.

[4] See the article on king Kaniṣka in the *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society*, 3.

[5] Wassiljew, *Der Buddhismus*, p. 52 note.

[6] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, i, pp. 208 and 270ff.

As to the parentage of Aśvaghoṣa, too, traditions widely differ. According to one, he was born in western India as son of Loka by Ghoṇā,[1] while Tārānātha describes him as a son of a rich Brāhman called Saṃghaguhya who married the youngest daughter of a merchant in Khorta. The Tibetan chronicler also adds that as a youth, when fully equipped with every branch of knowledge, Aśvaghoṣa 'went to Oḍiviśa, Gauḍa, Tirahuti, Kāmarūpa, and some other places (all in eastern India) defeating everywhere his Buddhist opponents by his ingenious logic'.[2] In the colophon of the extant text of the *Saundarananda-kāvya*, on the other hand, its author Aśvaghoṣa is respectfully described as 'the great eloquent poet, the mendicant and teacher, his reverence Aśvaghoṣa, the noble son of Suvarṇākṣī of Sāketa'.[3] In the colophons of the *Buddhacarita* and *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa*, he is described as a Sāketaka, son of Suvarṇākṣī.[4]

It is easy to make at least three Aśvaghoṣas out of these conflicting traditions: (1) Aśvaghoṣa, the author of the *Mahāsūtrālaṅkāra-śāstra*, who flourished three hundred or three hundred and seventy years after the *Nirvāṇa*; (2) Aśvaghoṣa, better Sthavira or Bhikṣu Aśvaghoṣa, a Hīnayānist monk who lived four hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*, and a disciple or disciple's disciple of the Sthavira Pārśva;[5] and (3) Aśvaghoṣa, i.e. Bodhisattva Aśvaghoṣa, the author of the *Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, who appeared five or six hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. Here one must increase each of the three dates by a century in order to rectify the mistake due to the confusion made in the Indian Buddhist traditions between king Aśoka and king Kālāśoka.

The *Sūtrālaṅkāra-śāstra* ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa is found to be in its Chinese translation by Kūmārajīva (A.D. 405) a compilation of stories that illustrate the retribution of karma and relate mostly to the events which occurred in western India. There is specifically nothing in its contents to indicate that it was a Mahāyāna work. The stories related in it rather go to show that the author of the work was a man of western India. Going by the traditional date, he flourished in the first century B.C.

The Sthavira Aśvaghoṣa who is connected by tradition with the Sthavira Pārśva or his disciple Puṇyayaśa was a contemporary of Kaniṣka, king of Gandhāra. This Aśvaghoṣa is described as a man of the middle country and a powerful Buddhist teacher whose place of activity was this very region of India, while Pārśva is associated with the Uttarāpatha including Kāśmīra. Although the tradition does not mention his works, it is not difficult to connect him with Aśvaghoṣa, the son of Suvarṇākṣī of Sāketa, who is eulogized in the colophon of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* as 'the great eloquent poet, the mendicant and teacher, his reverence Aśvaghoṣa'. It goes without saying that the tenets of the Buddha expounded by Aśvaghoṣa in his two kāvyas, viz. *the Buddhacarita and Saundarananda*, are all doctrines of Hīnayāna, there being not the slightest trace of Mahāyāna in them. There is neither any mention of Avalokiteśvara, the typical Mahāyāna Bodhisattva, in the writings of Aśvaghoṣa nor in the Hīnayāna books. According to Nanjio's Catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa was just an integral part of the Vinaya Piṭaka of the Dharmagupta sect which seceded like the Sarvāstivāda from

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[1]&[2] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[3] *Saundarananda-kāvya*, Johnston's edition, p. 142: *Ārya-Suvarṇākṣīputrasya Sāketakasya bhikṣor ācārya-bhadantāśvaghoṣasya mahākaver mahāvādinaḥ kṛtiriyam.*

[4] Johnston, *The Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, introd., p. xiii.

[5] In the list of the Buddhist patriarchs Aśvaghoṣa figures as the twelfth, and his name is mentioned immediately after Puṇyayaśa and before Kapimala and Nāgārjuna. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

the Mahīśāsakas, a typical Hīnayāna denomination. The *Milinda-Pañho*[1] preserves the tradition of a leading Buddhist thera named Assagutta (Aśvagupta) who belonged to a Hīnayāna sect having for its centres of activity the Saṅkheyya (Sāṃkhya) Pariveṇa at Sākala, the Vattaniya monastery in the Vindhya region and the Rakkhitatala in the central Himalayan region five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*,[2] that is to say, in the first century A.D. There is, perhaps, no other exponent of Buddhism than Aśvaghoṣa the poet whose writings are very much instinct with the Sāṃkhya doctrine.[3] The school of thought to which Assagutta of the Kuṣāṇa age belonged may be easily represented as one, probably the Dharmagupta, the views of which are similarly influenced by Sāṃkhya. It seems that Aśvaghoṣa himself was a personality, like Assagutta, of this very school of thought. There is at least one internal evidence in one of the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa, namely, the allusion to the practice of Suttee,[4] to connect him with the Kuṣāṇa age.

The Bodhisattva or Mahāyānist Aśvaghoṣa who is counted among the four suns of the Buddhists and who is said to have been placed in charge of the eastern quarter meaning eastern India flourished after 'the period of orthodoxy', that is to say, six or seven hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*, i.e. in the second or third century A.D. He is represented as a contemporary of a Tukhāra king called *Chan-tan-chi-ni-ch'a*. The Sanskrit equivalent of this name in Chinese transliteration so far suggested is Chandana Kaniṣka, Chandana Kaṇika, Chandana Kaniṣṭha or Chandana Kaṇita. Whatever might have been the right Sanskritization of the name, it cannot certainly be mistaken for an appellation of the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka. Both Fa-hien and Tārānātha represent king Kaṇika as a different person from Kaniṣka, the king of Yüeh-chih. According to the latter, Kaṇika was a king of Tili and Mālava, that is to say, of western India. The Indian name of the king might as well be Caṣṭana Kaṇika. At all events, he must be relegated to the second or third century A.D.

Whether he was the Bodhisattva, or the Sthavira Aśvaghoṣa, traditions correctly represent him as a powerful personality who was weaned from the Brahmanical tradition and persuasion. This is as true of the Aśvaghoṣas as of other great exponents of Buddhism who made their mark in the history of Indian Buddhism since the demise of the Buddha. It may be taken, then, for granted that Aśvaghoṣa, the author of the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*, was born and brought up in a Brahmin family of the middle country, or that he was a master of the Brahmanical lore before his conversion to the Buddhist faith. He is truly represented as a powerful *tīrthaka* or protagonist belonging to a different school of thought in his earlier days. After his adoption of the Buddhist faith he studied the Buddhist scriptures that were believed to have contained the genuine teachings of the Buddha. Whether as an adherent of the Dharmagupta or as that of the Sarvāstivāda sect and school of thought, he belonged to the fold of orthodoxy, and, as such, he is to be classed as a Hīnayānist or an advocate of the ideal of Arhatship. His writings bear an eloquent testi-

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[1] Pp. 6 foll. and 14 foll.

[2] *Milinda-Pañho*, Trenckner Ed., p. 3—'*parinibbānato pañcavassasate atikkante*'.

[3] Vide *Buddhacarita*, xii, where Aśvaghosa has set out the Sāṃkhya system. Here we get a formal statement of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems together with a refutation of them. *JRAS*, 1930, pp. 855–878; E. H. Johnston, *Early Sāṃkhya*, *JRAS Publication*, 1937, pp. 8, 9, 27, etc.

[4] *Saundarananda-kāvya*, VIII, 42: '*praviśantyapi hi striyaścitāmanubadhnantyapi muktajīvitāḥ*'—women enter into the funeral pyre of their husbands and follow them even at the risk of their lives.

mony to his mastery of Sanskrit diction and to his knowledge of Sanskrit grammar, Rhetoric and Prosody, Dramaturgy, Kāmaśāstra (erotic science), Rājadharma (royal duties), Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Epics and Upaniṣads. His definition of Madhyadeśa (Middle Country) differs from that met with in Buddhist literature, and it agrees exactly with the definition of Āryāvarta as given by Baudhāyana and Patañjali. [1]

No importance should be unduly attached to the tradition representing Aśvaghoṣa as the composer of an excellent tune called *Lai cha hero la* (Rāgasvara ?), the classical, mournful and melodious music of which induced the citizens of Pāṭaliputra to ponder on the misery, emptiness, and non-ātman-ness of life, [2] the songs referred to being no better in their purport than those sung in Ceylon by the maids while fetching water in pitchers (*ghaṭaceṭikās*). [3] The two kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa are full of such reflections.

The identity of Aśvaghoṣa and Mātṛcetā is sought to be established on the ground that both were known in the same way as the author of one hundred and fifty ślokas describing the six *Pāramitās* (Perfections) and eulogizing the excellent virtues of the *Tathāgata*. Keith says that the question of Aśvaghoṣa being identical with the poet Mātṛcetā is of literary rather than philosophical interest. [4] According to a Tibetan tradition Mātṛcetā sent an epistle to king Kaṇika of the Kuśa race. [5] I-tsing in his correspondence from the South Sea, [6] states that both Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna 'composed some beautiful and popular hymns that were sung by Buddhists throughout India at the time of his pilgrimage'. [7] Which Aśvaghoṣa, whether the Hīnayānist poet or the Mahāyānist doctor, is meant, we cannot say. The hymns and the songs mentioned, as far as may be judged from their contents and burden, fall well within the scope of the two kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa. The same remark holds equally true of the *Sūtra* on the doctrine of non-ego addressed to a Nirgrantha which is ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa. [8]

The discovery, even though in fragments only, of the Sanskrit originals of some of the works indiscriminately ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa in the Chinese and Tibetan traditions, has enabled scholars to ascertain the exact position. Lüders, [9] for instance, has succeeded in identifying the fragments of a manuscript found in Central Asia with the Sanskrit original of the work known so long from its Chinese version as Aśvaghoṣa's *Sūtrālaṅkāra*. Keith says that this work even through the medium of a Chinese translation shows much merit. It is a collection of edifying legends of the Jātaka type in

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[1] *Saundarananda*, II, 62: *Madhyadeśa iva vyakto Himavat-Pāripātrayoḥ*. Cf. *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*, ii, 10; *Mahābhāṣya* to Pāṇini, ii, 4.10.

[2] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[3] *Paramatthajotikā* on the Suttanipāta, II, p. 397– . . . . . sace pi milakkhabhāsapariyāpannā ghaṭaceṭikāgītakapariyāpannā vā hoti, tathā pi subhāsitā evalokiyalokuttara-hitasukhāvahattā, sīhaḷadīpe maggapasse sassaṃ rakkhantiyā sīhaḷaceṭikāya sīhaḷaken'eva jātijarāmaraṇayuttaṃ gītaṃ gāyantiya sutvā maggaṃ gacchantā saṭṭhimattā vipassakabhikkhū c'ettha arahattaṃ pattā . . . . . . . . The songs sung by them are translated into Pali as follows:

'Pātakaphullitakokanadaṃ suriyālokena taj jīyate,
evaṃ manussattagatā sattā jarābhivegena maddīyantīti.
Jarāya parimadditaṃ etaṃ milātacchavicammanissitaṃ
maraṇena bhijjati etaṃ maccussa ghasaṃ āmisaṃ
Kimīnaṃ ālayaṃ etaṃ nānākuṇapena pūritaṃ
asucissa bhājanaṃ etaṃ kadalikkhandhasamaṃ idan.'

[4] *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 229.

[5] *IA*, 1903, pp. 345ff.

[6] *Nan hai chi kuei ch'uan*, Ch. 32, on Chanting.

[7] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[9] Cf. *Bruchstücke Buddhistischer Dramen*, p. 63; Poussin, *Museon*, X (1909), 86ff.

which Aśvaghoṣa applies the sources of his poetic spirit to adorn the teachings of the faith.[1] The fragments of the Sanskrit text go to establish that its title is *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* [2] or *Kalpanā-laṃkritikā* instead of *Sūtrālaṅkāra* [3] and that its author is Kumāralāta instead of Aśvaghoṣa. This is borne out by the Tibetan translation of the work, and the Chinese translator of the work is not probably Kumārajīva but a later writer.[4]

The Vajrasūcī [5] which is 'a clever piece of polemics' against the caste-system upheld by the Brahmins is one of the works ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa.[6] The violent diatribe against the Brahmins in this work explains and is explained by the dignified contempt for the Buddhist in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* (pp. 43–46) and a calm vindication of a Brāhmaṇa's superiority in *Pañcarātra* (i, 25, 7).[7] The Chinese translation ascribes it more correctly to Dharmakīrti. It is certain that the work itself was inspired by the *Vajrasūcika Upaniṣad* on the one hand and the *Maitrakanyakāvadāna* in the *Divyāvadāna* [8] on the other.

As regards the *Gaṇḍistotra* [9] Keith points out that this work shows Aśvaghoṣa's power of music. It is an attempt to describe the religious message carried to the hearts of men by the sounds produced by beating a long strip of wood with a short club.[10] F. W. Thomas says [11] that its Chinese name is *Kien-ch'ui-fan-tsan* edited by A. Von Stael Holstein. It is a noteworthy literary achievement. Its commentary is in Russian. It is mentioned in Nanjio's catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka under 1081 where it is called *Ghanti* (*kā*?)—*Samskṛta-stotra* or *Ghanti sūtra*. In the Tibetan Tanjur it is represented by a translation. It is a fine work worthy of Aśvaghoṣa and it is characterized by much metrical and literary subtlety. A number of lines consist of mere experiments in musical sound, the various *rasas* being conveyed phonetically by meaningless syllables. The Gaṇḍi quite different from Ghaṇṭi (bell) is a long, symmetrically shaped, piece of wood whence sounds are produced by beating.[12] According to Winternitz, the Gaṇḍistotra has tried to reconstruct in the Sanskrit original on the basis of the Chinese transliteration. It is a beautiful poem, worthy of Aśvaghoṣa, both in form and contents.[13] But the stotra which is a collection

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1 *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 227.

2 Lüders (*DLZ*, 1919, p. 414—*Bruchstücke der Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā des Kumāralāta*, 1926); cf. *Bruchstucke Buddhistischer Dramen*, p. 63; Poussin, *Museon*, X (1909) 86ff. It is a collection of pious legends after the manner of the Jātakas and Avadānas, told in prose and verse in the style of ornate poetry. Some of the legends are well known, e.g. legends about Śibi and Dīrghāyu (M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 267). *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* and *Kalpanālaṃkritikā* appear as titles in the colophons.

3 Trans. Ed. Huber, Paris, 1908; Levi, *JA*, 1908, ii, 57ff.

4 Tomomatsu, in *JA*, 1931, ii, p. 163.

5 It is called Diamond needle—'*Wujra Soochi*' published by L. Wilkinson with the translation by B. H. Hodgson, *Transactions of the RAS*, Vol. III, 1829; A. F. Weber, *uber die Vajrasūcī*, *ABA*, 1859, pp. 205ff.; *Indische streifen*, I, 186ff.; cf. B. H. Hodgson, *Essays on the languages, literature and religion of Nepal and Tibet*, London, 1874, pp. 125ff.; S. Levi, *JA*, 1908, S. 10 t. XII, 70ff.; E. Burnouf, *Introduction a L'histoire du Bouddhism Indien*, Paris, 1876, pp. 192ff.

6 R. L. Mitra, *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, 1882, p. 268. This work has been translated in a very spirited style into English by B. H. Hodgson in his *Essays* (pp. 126ff.).

7 *JRAS*, July 1921, p. 377.

8 (Ed. Cowell and Neil), pp. 586–609.

9 Ed. *Bibliotheca Buddhica*, St. Petersburg, 15, 1913.

10 *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 56.

11 *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 752-753.

12 For description, vide the work of Von Stael-Holstein, pp. xxi-xxii; *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 752-3.

13 *A History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 266.

of 29 stanzas, mostly in the *Sragdharā* metre, in praise of the Buddha and the monastery-going, shows in its 20th verse that it was written in 'Kashmir during one of the periods of misrule', and its style also bears little resemblance to that of Aśvaghoṣa.

As shown by Johnston, only one of the few verses quoted in the *Kavīndravacanasamuccaya* in the name of Aśvaghoṣa is to be found in the three works that were genuinely his. The authenticity of the attribution of the five verses in the Subhāṣitāvalī is highly problematic.

The Tibetan tradition confused Aśvaghoṣa with Subhūti among many other writers. Vasubandhu in his *Abhidharma-koṣa* cites a verse of the Dhārmika Subhūti which is now traced in a recently discovered Sanskrit text of the *Ṣaḍgatikārikā*, of which the Pali counterpart is named *Pañcagatidīpana*.[1] Aśvaghoṣa the poet cannot be mistaken for the author of the *Ṣaḍgatikārikā* since he speaks of five *gatis* only in his *Buddhacarita*, XIV and *Saundarananda*, XI, 62.

Sten Konow says that Aśvaghoṣa's literary efforts on behalf of Buddhism extended also to the sphere of drama. From the fragments of his work known as the *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa*, it is evident that he was master of the technique of the art and that his drama already manifests most of the characteristics of the Indian theatre.[2] As a dramatist Aśvaghoṣa was a worthy predecessor of Kalidasa.[3]

The earliest dramas known to us by fragments are the Buddhist dramas of Aśvaghoṣa. The *Lalitavistara* [4] does not hesitate to speak of the Buddha as possessing knowledge of the drama among his accomplishments. The Buddha is even called one who has entered to gaze on the drama of the great law.[5] The discovery of Aśvaghoṣa's fragments shows that the drama has already attained a very definite and complete form.[6]

It must be borne in mind that Aśvaghoṣa was the exponent of the faith which had originally insisted on the use of the vernacular as opposed to Sanskrit and that it is absurd to imagine that it would have occurred to him to use Sanskrit in dramas of Buddhist inspiration and aim, had not the use of that language been established in the drama of the day. It leads us to the conclusion that the drama from the beginning was written in part at least in Sanskrit.[7] Aśvaghoṣa has three dialects which suggest much older forms of Sauraseni, Māgadhī and Ardha-Māgadhī. The use of these dialects for characters by Aśvaghoṣa explains itself naturally from his familiarity with the Buddhist scriptures whose original was very probably in something akin to the Ardha-Māgadhī known to him.[8] The stage reached in the Prakrits of Aśvaghoṣa shows clearly how late are the Prakrits of the orthodox classical drama and reminds us how much more closely akin to Sanskrit must have been the Prakrit of the drama of the time of Patañjali.[9] Of the three Buddhist dramas discovered at Turfan the authorship of one of them is certain for the colophon of the last act has been preserved and it records

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[1] It is an extra Canonical Pali work edited by M. Leon Feer (*JPTS*, 1884, pp. 152–161) dealing with the five *gatis* or destinies which are in store for beings according as they commit good or bad deeds in this world by body, mind, etc. For details vide B. C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, II, pp. 627 foll.

[2] *Das Indische Drama*, pp. 50 foll.

[3] H. Luders, *Das Śāriputraprakaraṇa ein drama des Aśvaghoṣa* in *SBA*, 1911, 388 foll.

[4] XII, p. 178; cf. *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 357, 360 and 361.

[5] Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*, p. 43.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 75; cf. Jacobi, *Bhavisattakahā*, pp. 84 foll.

that the drama was the *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa* of Aśvaghoṣa. Its fuller title is *Śāradvatīputraprakaraṇa* consisting of nine acts. The brief fragments of Aśvaghoṣa's drama establish the certainty of his authorship, for one verse is taken bodily from the *Buddhacarita* just as he twice refers in the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* to that important work.

According to Anesaki, 'We have not enough evidence either to affirm or deny the identity of any of the Aśvaghoṣas with the author of the *Buddhacarita-kāvya*. The epithet may have been applied to many authors of different periods.' [1]

Thus we have ultimately to rely upon the three works which are definitely known as Aśvaghoṣa's for all discussions concerning him as man and as poet and teacher.

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[1] Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, II, pp. 159-160.

## Chapter II

# AŚVAGHOṢA THE MAN

Aśvaghoṣa is not known to have written an autobiography, nor is there any piece of writing which might be treated as his authentic biography. He left behind him at least three works, two kāvyas and one drama, which are definitely known to be his, and in their colophons he is described as a man of Sāketa who was the son of Suvarṇākṣī, and rightly eulogized as a great poet, teacher and monk. Suvarṇākṣī was evidently the name of his mother, presumably a gotra name. It was usual with the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas to be known by matronymics rather than their patronymics, a fact which goes only to prove the prevalence of polygamy, particularly in the two upper social grades. But how far the information supplied in the colophons of his three works regarding his birthplace and mother is authentic, none can say. If it is a genuine one, he was certainly a person who belonged to the Midland or Middle Country as defined in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Manusaṃhitā* and Buddhist literature.[1] But when Aśvaghoṣa spoke of the Middle Country as placed between the Himalayas and the Pāripātra, he made a confusion between the definition of Āryāvarta (Aryandom) by Baudhāyana[2] and Patañjali on the one hand and Manu's definition of the Madhyadeśa[3] on the other. Its eastern and western boundaries being not given, it is difficult to say what he actually meant by the word Middle Country, whether the whole of Āryāvarta or northern India or only its middle portion watered by the Ganges system of rivers. The definition agrees only with that offered in the law book of Vaśiṣṭha.[4]

The tradition which represents Aśvaghoṣa as a person born and brought up in a Brahmin family of the Middle Country and as an erudite Brahmin scholar prior to his conversion to Buddhism may be taken for granted. We have similar traditions regarding Moggaliputta Tissa,[5] Nāgasena,[6]

[1] It (*Madhyadeśa* or *Majjhimadesa*) extended in the east to the town of Kajaṅgala beyond which was the city of Mahāsāla; in the south-east to the river Salalavatī (Śarāvatī); in the south to the town of Satakaṇṇika; in the west to the Brāhmaṇa district of Thūṇa and in the north to the Usīradhaja mountain (*Vinaya*, V, pp. 12-13; *Jāt.*, I, 49, 80). Kajaṅgala which is identical with *Ka-chu-wen-ki-lo* of Yuan Chwang formed the eastern boundary of the Madhyadesa (*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, II, p. 429). It lay at a distance of above 400 li east from Champā (Bhāgalpur). As Yuan Chwang's account makes Thaneswar the western-most country of the Buddhist middle country, Thūna may, according to some, be identified with Sthānvīsvara (Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, Intro., p. xliii, f.n. 2). Usīradhaja may be identified with Usiragiri, a mountain to the north of Kankhal (Hardwar).—*Indian Antiquary*, 1905, p. 179.

[2] In the Dharmasūtra of Baudhāyana (I, 1, 2, 9, etc.) Āryāvarta or Aryandom which is practically identical with the country later on known as Madhyadeśa is described as lying to the east of the region where the river Sarasvatī disappears, to the west of the Kālakavana or Black Forest (identified with a tract somewhere near Prayāga), to the north of Pāripatra and to the south of the Himalayas (B. C. Law, *Geography of Early Buddhism*, p. I; Cunningham, *AGI*, pp. xli and f.n. 1).

[3] The *Dharmaśāstra* of Manu calls the Āryāvarta of the sūtras to be the Madhyadeśa which he defines as extending from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhyas in the south and from Vinaśana (the place where the river Sarasvatī disappears) in the west to Prayāga in the east. (*Himavad-Vindhyayor-madhyam yat prāk Vinaśanād api pratyag eva Prayāgāśca Madhyadeśaḥ . . .*)

[4] I. 8.

[5] President of the Third Buddhist Council—*Mahāvaṃsa*, V, 95ff., 131 foll; *Dīpavaṃsa*, V, 55ff., 68ff., 82, 94, 96, 100ff., 107, etc.

[6] He was the son of a Brahmin. He was well versed in the Vedas and was later

Buddhaghosa, [1] and other later great exponents of Buddhism. It is, for instance, said of Buddhaghosa, the greatest known Pali scholiast, that as a Brahmin youth born at Bodhgayā, he acquired the knowledge of all the sciences and arts and mastered the three Vedas. He perfectly understood the meaning of the doctrine and was well versed in all the (Brahmanical) systems of thought, especially in that of Patañjali. As an able disputant, he wandered about in India to engage himself in controversies. [2] But Aśvaghoṣa excelled all of them, even Buddhaghosa, in bringing his Brahmanical education to bear upon his interpretation of Buddhism.

Johnston rightly points out [3] that the upper limit for Aśvaghoṣa's date is determined by the mention of the Asoka legend in Canto 28 of the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita*.[4] The lower limit is similarly fixed by the date of the Chinese translation of this work by Dharmarakṣa in about 420 A.D. The Chinese traditions place the date of the Bodhisattva Aśvaghoṣa, the author of the *Mahāyāna Śradhotpāda-śāstra*, definitely after the period of the Orthodoxy, i.e. six hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. If 488-87 B.C. be accepted as the date of Buddha's *Nirvāṇa*, the beginning of the history of Mahāyāna must be placed in at least the second century A.D. The Sthavira Aśvaghoṣa, on the other hand, is placed within the period of the Orthodoxy, and at least five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. One of the traditions, as we noted, connects him with the Sthavira Pārśva who was a contemporary of Kaṇiṣka and an adherent of the Sarvāstivāda sect. This tradition goes to make the Sthavira Aśvaghoṣa a younger contemporary of Pārśva and Vasumitra, the latter being leading Thera under whose presidency the Buddhist Council of Kaṇiṣka's time is said to have been convened in Kashmir.

The *Milinda* and a few of Buddhaghosa's commentaries maintain the tradition of a great Thera called Assagutta (Aśvagupta) [5] whose date is placed five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa* and who is wrongly represented as a contemporary of the Bactrian King, Milinda-Menander. He is described in the *Milinda* as the ablest known exponent of Buddhism of the age who was a great contemporary of the Thera Āyupāla of the Saṅkheyya Parivena [6] (Sāṃkhya monastic school) in Sāgala (Śākala), situated in Uttarāpatha, as well as of the Thera Dhammarakkhita who was evidently a master of the Sutta Piṭaka and resided in the city of Pāṭaliputra.[7] Assagutta usually lived in the Vattaniya hermitage [8] which is located elsewhere in the Vindhya forest. He was evidently the leader of the Saṅgha at the time, for it was he who summoned an assembly at Yugandhara to discuss

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converted into Buddhism. He learnt the teaching of the Buddha. (For details see *Milinda-Pañho*, pp. 6 foll.).

[1] A celebrated Buddhist Commentator of the Hīnayāna School (vide B. C. Law, *The Life and Work of Buddhaghosa*).

[2] *Cūḷavaṃsa*, edited by Geiger, Vol. I, vv. 215–217.
Bodhimaṇḍasamīpamhi jāto brāhmaṇa-māṇavo |
vijjā-sippa-kalāvedī tīsu vedesu pārago ||
Sammā-viññāta-samayo sabba-vāda-visārado |
vādatthī Jambudīpamhi āhiṇḍanto pavādino ||
Vihāraṃ ekaṃ āgamma rattiṃ Pātañjali-mataṃ |
parivattetī sampuṇṇapadaṃ suparimaṇḍalaṃ ||

[3] *Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, Intro., pp. xiii foll.

[4] *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King* (S.B.E. Vol. XIX), pp. 325f., 336.

[5] *Milinda-Pañho*, Trenckner Ed., pp. 6, 7, 14, etc.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 16—Pāṭaliputtanagare Asokārāme āyasmā Dhammarakkhito paṭivasati.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 14—ayam kho Nāgasena āyasmā Assagutto Vattaniye senāsane viharati.

the danger caused by Milinda's controversies.[1] In the commentaries he is regarded as an example of a Kalyāṇamitta, full of compassion, association with whom leads to the destruction of ill-will.[2] The *Milinda* refers to the Rakkhitatala which was a protected plain, in the Himalayan region, where the arahants met and discussed what they should do to solve the questions put by Milinda.[3] Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga* [4] and *Atthasālinī*,[5] speaks of a Thera Assagutta, evidently a visitor to the Vattaniya hermitage in the Vindhya forest, by whose desire the pool water was turned into curds before the meal and became natural water again after the meal.

Aśvaghoṣa's reference to the Suttee rite [6] gives rise to a chronological problem. So far as the classical writers are concerned, it is Strabo who, basing his account on the authority of Aristoboulos, a companion of Alexander, says that he had heard from some persons of wives burning themselves along with their deceased husbands and doing so gladly and that those women who refused to burn themselves were held in disgrace. [7]

It is clear from Strabo's account that Suttee was until then only a Taxilian usage. It is highly doubtful if the usage was prevalent even in Taxila in Alexander's time. Strabo must have recorded what he came to know of the rite as it was prevalent in his time (i.e. first century A.D.). There seems to be much truth in Vincent Smith's opinion when he says, 'Suttee probably was a Scythian rite introduced from Central Asia.' [8]

The *Mahābhārata* is full of descriptions of the different customs and usages of the peoples of Uttarāpatha. The widows preferred to betake themselves to ascetic life instead of burning themselves with their deceased husbands. [9] The Kuru ladies are not known to have observed the Suttee rite. But in the *Mahābhārata* [10] (*Strīparva*) Vidura is represented as burning on a funeral pyre, by the king's orders, all the widows who gathered together from the different parts of the country and in the *Śāntiparva* of the same Epic [11] the Suttee rite is praised as a practice in the case of all chaste widows.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 6—Atha kho āyasmā Assagutto dibbāya sotadhātuyā Milindassa rañño vacanam sutvā Yugandharamatthake bhikkhusaṅghaṃ sannipātetvā bhikkhū pucchi.

[2] *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī*, II, p. 779; *Manoratha-pūraṇī* (Sinhalese Ed.) I, p. 28; *Sammohavinodanī*, p. 272. Assaguttattherasadise mettābhāvanārate kalyāṇamitte sevantassāpi vyāpādo pahīyati; Malalasekora, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, I, p. 224.

[3] *Milinda*, p. 6—Tena kho pana samayena koṭisatā arahanto Himavante pabbate Rakkhitatale paṭivasanti.

[4] *Visuddhimagga*, p. 430—Assaguttatthero Vattaniyasenāsane bhikkhusaṅgham sukkhabhattam bhuñjamānaṃ disvā udakasoṇḍim divase divase pure-bhatte dadhirasam (dadhisaram) hotūti adhiṭṭhāsi. Pure-bhatte gahitaṃ dadhirasam (dadhisaram) hoti, pacchābhatte pākatika-udakaṃ eva.

[5] *Atthasālinī*, p. 419—Assaguttatthero Vattaniyasenāsane bhikkhusaṅghaṃ sukkhabhattaṃ bhuñjamānaṃ disvā udakasoṇḍiṃ divase divase pure-bhattaṃ dadhisaraṃ hotūti adhiṭṭhahi. Purebhattaṃ dadhisaraṃ hoti pacchābhatte pākatikaṃ eva.

[6] *Saundarananda*, VIII, 42.

[7] Strabo, Bk. XV, Ch. i, Sec. 62; McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature* (Constable, 1901), p. 69.

[8] *Oxford History of India*, p. 62.

[9] *Mahābhārata*, XV, 148, 3—'*Śocyā bhavati bandhūnāṃ patihīnā tapasvinī.*'

[10] Chapter 26, vv. 42 and 43—'Ye cāpyanāthāstatrasannānādeśasamāgatāḥ |
tāṃśca sarvān samānāyya rāśīn kṛtvā sahasraśaḥ ||
citvā dārubhirvyagraiḥ prabhūtaiḥ snehapācitaiḥ |
dāhayāmāsa Viduro dharmarājasya śāsanāt ' ||

[11] Chapter 148, vv. 8–10.
'Patihīnā tu kā nārī sati jīvitumutsahet
Evam vilapya bahudhā karuṇaṃ sā suduḥkhitā
Pativratā saṃpradīptaṃ praviveśa hutāśanaṃ
Tataścitrāṅgadadharaṃ bharttāraṃ sānvapaśyata
Vimānasthaṃ sukṛtibhiḥ pūjyamānaṃ mahātmabhiḥ.'

Aśvaghoṣa must have lived in some part of Uttarāpatha or heard about the Suttee rite which became prevalent in the country of Gandhāra. And if it became a widely prevalent usage among the women of India of his time, he must have flourished even after the Kuṣāṇa age.

Even admitting that Aśvaghoṣa was a Hīnayāna Buddhist, Johnston has pertinently raised the interesting question as to the particular Buddhist sect and school of thought to which he might have belonged and tended to maintain that he was 'either a Bahuśrutika or an adherent of the school (the Kaukūlikas ?) from which the Bahuśrutikas issued'.[1] The Kaukūlikas were evidently a typical school of Buddhist pessimists, the main proposition of their doctrine being: *sabbe dhammā kukkulā*, 'All conditioned things are without qualification no better than a welter of embers'.[2] The Bahuśrutikas who had seceded from the Kaukūlikas (Pāli Gokulikas) were also known in the Pali Chronicles by the name of Bāhulikas.[3] Combining the two names into one, one may get a name corresponding with *bahulam-assutika*, meaning 'one guided by much of non-Buddhistic doctrinal tradition,' which as an epithet is applied in the *Mahāvaṃsa* [4] to a Thera of Ceylon called Tissa who brought about a separation between the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagiri monks. The Tibetan tradition derives the name of the Bahuśrutiyas from their teacher, Bahuśrutiya, and tells us that 'in addition to the five propositions held by the Mahāsaṅghikas, they considered it as a fundamental doctrine that there is no mode of life leading to real salvation, that the truth of suffering is the Noble Truth, that to perceive the suffering of the *saṃskāras* is to enter perfect purity, that there is no way of seeing the misery of suffering and the misery of change; the Saṃgha is but subject to worldly laws and conditions, arahants acquire the doctrine of others, there is a rightly preached way and a right entry into *samāpatti*.'[5]

According to Vasumitra, the Bahuśrutikas generally followed the Sarvāstivādin doctrine, differing from it mainly on two points, while in the *Mahāvyutpatti* (275) they are counted among the schools which seceded from the Sarvāstivāda.

Johnston's argument for connecting the Bahuśrutikas with the Mahāsaṅghikas is rather weak. The acceptance of 'the five points of Mahādeva' was held as the common feature of all the sects and schools of thought belonging to the Mahāsaṅgha family. These points were all directed against Orthodoxy upholding the ideal of Arhatship.[6] Now the fourth point of Mahādeva lays down that Arhats gain spiritual perception by the help of others.[7] And if the Bahuśrutiyas maintained this view and Aśvaghoṣa, too, did the same,[8] it follows that both the Bahuśrutiyas and Aśvaghoṣa belonged to the opposite camp, and not to the Mahāsaṅghikas.

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[1] *The Buddhacarita*, II, Intro., p. xxxiii.

[2] *Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, *JPTS*, 1889, p. 57. '*Sabbe saṃkhārā kukkulā vītaccikaṅgāra-sammissā*.'
Vide also B. C. Law, *The Debates Commentary*, *PTS* Tr. Series, p. 70.

[3] *Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, p. 2—'*Gokulikanikāyato bhijjitvā aparāni dve ācariyakulāni jātāni Paṇṇattivādā ca Bāhulikā ca. Bahussutikā ti pi tesaṃ eva nāmaṃ.*'
Cf. *Dīpavaṃsa*, V, 41: '*Gokulikānāṃ dve bhedā aparakālaṃhi jāyatha: Bahussutakā* (variants *Bahussutikā*, *Bāhulikā*) *ca paññatti duvidhā bhijjittha bhikkhavo*.'

[4] XXXIII, 96—'*Tassa sisso Bahalamassu Tissatthero'ti vissuto, Kuddho 'bhayagiriṃ gantvā vasipakkhaṃ vahaṃ tahiṃ*'.

[5] Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 183, 189; Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, II, p. 274.

[6] N. Dutt, *Early History of the Spread of Buddhism and Buddhist Schools*, p. 230.

[7] La Vallee Poussin in *JRAS*, 1910, pp. 413ff.

[8] *Saundarananda*, V, 17: *Yatnena tu pratyayaneyabuddhir vimokṣam āpnoti parāśrayeṇa*—He whose intelligence is susceptible only to external conditions obtains salvation with difficulty and only by depending on others.

There must have been something wrong somewhere. The seceders from the Kaukūlikas were the Bāhulikas, and the Bahusūtrakas (Bahusuttakā) according to the *Dīpavaṃsa*. [1] Whatever the sect or school of thought to which Aśvaghoṣa belonged, it was closely connected with the Sarvāstivāda, and this is clearly borne out by the Chinese tradition connecting the Sthavira Aśvaghoṣa with the Sthavira Pārśva or his disciple Puṇyayaśa. The Pali Chronicles [2] speak of the Kāśyapiyas as seceders from the Sarvāstivāda, and of the Sarvāstivāda and the Dharmagupta as seceders from the Mahīśāsaka sect. It is not unreasonable to think that the Dharmagupta sect was better an offshoot of the Sarvāstivāda, and it would be historically sound if the Dharmaguptas were taken as those who were also known by the name of Bahuśrutikas. The Kāśyapiyas, as their name implies, upheld the tradition of Mahākāśyapa and venerated him as their great patriarch or patron saint. 'The doubling of the epithet mahā before Kāśyapa's name proved', says Johnston,[3] 'that this saint was specially revered by Aśvaghoṣa's sect, a conclusion supported by the story of his conversion in the *Buddhacarita* (Chinese version), xvi.' Johnston quotes the views of Przyluski [4] to establish that the Mahāsaṅghikas also are known to share with Aśvaghoṣa a knowledge of the saint Sudarśana, a special veneration for Kāśyapa, and an insistence on the connection of the asterism Puṣya with the Buddha.[5]

These constitute only a presumptive evidence which is inconclusive in effect. The Sthavira Sudarśana mentioned by Aśvaghoṣa in his *Saundarananda* [6] may not have been the Sudarśana revered by the Mahāsaṅghikas. The Tibetan tradition speaks of a Sthavira Sudarśana who was formerly Simha, king of Kashmir, and a contemporary of Kaṇiṣka and the Mahayanist priest Aśvaghoṣa of northern countries. [7]

If Aśvaghoṣa has upheld the points of the doctrine which tradition associates with this or that sect and school of thought, it may be due to the fact that he was a Bahuśrutika within the definition of Hīnayāna and closely connected with the Sarvāstivāda tradition. It is truly said of the Sthavira Aśvaghoṣa of the middle country associated with the Sthavira Pārśva that he made 'an extensive study of the *Sūtras*, seeking a clear comprehension of the doctrine, Buddhistic as well as non-Buddhistic'.[8]

As for the Dharmaguptas, none of the propositions controverted in the *Kathāvatthu* is referred to them in the commentary. The Tibetan tradition would have us believe that they derived their name from their leader called Dharmagupta. They maintained, *inter alia*, that there is a reward for offerings made to the Buddha but not for those made to the Saṅgha.

The effectiveness of offerings made in the name of the Buddha is advocated in the *Milinda* [9] containing the doctrinal views of the school of Aśvagupta. The importance of *śraddhā*, *vīrya*, and other points of the doctrine stressed in the writings of Aśvaghoṣa [10] is equally emphasized in the *Milinda*.[11] In the *Milinda*, just as in the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa, we have a

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[1] V, 41.

[2] *Mahāvamsa*, Chap. V, vv. 8-9—*Mahimsāsakabhikkhūhi bhikkhū sabbatthavādino Dhammaguttikabhikkhū ca jātā khalu ime duve. Jātā sabbatthavādthi Kassapiyā*.....

[3] *The Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, Intro., pp. xxvii-xxviii.

[4] *Le Concile de Rājagṛha*, 206.

[5] *The Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, Intro., p. xxix.

[6] XVI, 89.

[7] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[8] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[9] *Milinda*, pp. 291, 294, etc.

[10] *B.*, XII, v. 111; *S.*, XVI, 47, 93 foll.; *S.*, IV, 29; V, 1, 5; XV, 21; XVIII, 4 (*bhakti*).

[11] *Milinda*, p. 36—*Saddhāya tarati oghaṃ*..................*viriyena dukkhaṃ acceti*.....

synthesis of the views of different Buddhist sects and schools. Both presuppose the Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems of philosophy.[1] The true spirit of the Dharmaguptas is probably set forth by Aśvaghoṣa in the following exhortation of the Buddha addressed to Nanda:—

'Rise up, for you stand in the Law, beloved of my followers. Do not lay your head at my feet; you do not do me so much reverence by obeisance as by this acceptance of the Law.'

'To-day you have learnt that which is of good purport and full of learning and have followed the Law according to the learning.'[2]

It is stated at the end of the Chinese translation of the *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*[3] that the following titles of the Life of the Buddha have been adopted by different schools: the *Mahāvastu* by the Mahāsaṅghikas, the *Lalitavistara* by the Sarvāstivādins, and the *Śākyamuni-carita* by the Dharmaguptas. There is no life of the Buddha known as yet in Sanskrit bearing the title of *Śākyamuni-carita*. If by the *Śākyamuni-carita* is meant no other work than the *Buddhacarita*, then we have a definite tradition to connect Aśvaghoṣa with the Dharmaguptas.

Aśvaghoṣa was a well-read man and he was accurate in his knowledge.[4] A careful study of the two kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa shows that the poet was well acquainted with the Ṛgveda, the Epics and the Upaniṣads. Even the Divyāvadāna, a work of the Sarvāstivāda school, was not unknown to him. The ceremony of measuring out *soma* as referred to in the *Saundarananda* (I, 15; II, 36) suggests the possibility of his knowledge of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. His close acquaintance with the Śvetāśvatara among the Upaniṣads may be easily inferred from a number of possible parallels.[5] Aśvaghoṣa's exposition of the Sāṃkhya system through the mouth of Arāḍa[6] has close parallels in the Mokṣadharma section of the *Mahābhārata*. Keith says that Buddha's meeting with Arāḍa gives ample proof of the influence of Sāṃkhya on Buddhism.[7]

Aśvaghoṣa refers to Bṛhaspati who begot Bharadvāja on Mamatā.[8] There are many other references to Bṛhaspati in the *Buddhacarita* (I, 41; IV, 74-5; VII, 43).[9] Bṛhaspati and Śukra were the first authors of works on polity. The *Saundarananda* (I, 4) and the *Buddhacarita* (II, 56; X, 18; XII, 88) mention the name of Āṅgirasa.[10] Agastya asked for Rohiṇī, wife of Soma and obtained Lopāmudrā who resembled her.[11] The name of this sage occurs in the Ṛgveda (VII. 10. 33). He was called Mānya.[12] In the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* there is a mention of Parāśara.[13] The Ṛgveda (VII. 18. 21) refers to him along with Satyayātu and Vaśiṣṭha. According to the *Nirukta* (VI, 30), he was the son of Vaśiṣṭha. Ambarīṣa

[1] *Milinda*, p. 3; *Sankhyā Yogā Nīti Visesikā*.

[2] *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 22, 25:

Uttiṣṭha dharme sthita śisyajuṣṭe
kiṃ pādayorme patito'si mūrdhnā |
abhyarcanaṃ me na tathā praṇāmo
dharme yathaiṣā pratipattireva || 22
Adyārthavatte śrutavacchrutaṃ
tacchrutānurūpaṃ pratipadya dharmaṃ | 25

[3] Nanjio, No. 680—A catalogue of the Chinese translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka by Bunyiu Nanjio, p. 163.

[4] Johnston, *Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, p. xliv.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. xlv and xlvi.

[6] *Ibid.*, xii.

[7] *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 139.

[8] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 74.

[9] Cf. *Mahābhārata*, I, 76, 3191.

[10] See *Vedic Index*, II, p. 72.

[11] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 73; cf. *Mbh.*, III, 110, 10092; III, 130, 10541; IV, 21, 655.

[12] Ṛgveda, i, 165.

[13] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 76; *Saundarananda*, VII. 29. Cf. *Mbh.*, I, 60, 2209.

is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*.[1] The Ṛgveda mentions Ambarīṣa as a Vārṣagira (I, 100, 17). There were many Ambarīṣas of whom the most important was the son of Nābhāga. Prajāpati is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (XII, 21). It occurs several times in the *Mahābhārata* (XIII, 19, 1475; 20, 1498; 40225—*sargāt prajāpateḥ*). The name of the Kaurava king Pāṇḍu occurs in the *Saundarananda* (VII, 45) and in the *Buddhacarita* (IV, 79).[2] He was the son of Vyāsa by Ambālikā, the widow of Vicitravīrya, husband of Kuntī and Mādrī, and father of the five Pāṇḍavas. Aśvaghoṣa mentions the name of the royal sage Yayāti who dallied with the Apsarā Viśvākī in the Caitraratha grove.[3] In the Ṛgveda (I. 31. 17; X. 63. 1) he is mentioned once as an ancient sacrificer and once as a king.[4] Vyāsa arranged the lost Vedas in many sections.[5] He was kicked by the harlot Kāśisundarī.[6] He was also called Dvaipāyana who classified the Vedas.[7] He was the son of Parāśara and Satyavatī.[8] Viśvāmitra who was the son of Gādhi (Gādhija)[9] was captivated by the Apsarā Ghṛtācī.[10] The *Buddhacarita* (IV, 19) mentions Ṛṣyaśṛṅga who was enticed by Śāntā.[11] He was the son of Vibhāṇḍaka according to the *Rāmāyaṇa* (III, 110, 9991). Dīrghatapas Gautama is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (IV, 18). He was captivated by a low caste young woman.[12] Dīrghatapas later came to be called Dīrghatamas.[13] Aja is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (VIII, 79).[14] Aśvaghoṣa refers to Manu, son of Vaivasvata.[15] Tālajaṅgha fell in love with Menakā.[16] Aśvaghoṣa mentions Aurva,[17] Pṛthu,[18] and Māndhātṛ.[19] The *Saundarananda* mentions Sagara,[20] Bhārgava,[21] Vālmiki[22] and Kāṇva.[23] Sagara twice referred to by Aśvaghoṣa (*B.*, I, 49; *S.*, I, 25) occurs also in the Bālakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is mentioned in the *Saundarananda* (I, 15; II, 36) that king Śuddhodana caused his priest to measure out the Soma at the proper time and with due ceremony. Aśvaghoṣa refers to Yoga in his *Saundarananda* (V, 32).[24] King Śāntanu, son of Pratīpa, lost all self-control when Gaṅgā left him.[25] Aśvaghoṣa refers to the fall of Indra.[26] Janaka was able to instruct the

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[1] *Buddhacarita*, IX, 69; *Saundarananda*, VII, 51.
[2] *Mahābhārata*, I, 115, 4487; I, 95, 110, 117-8; I, 40, 1665; I, 60, 2213, etc.
[3] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 78; *Saundarananda*, II, 53; XI, 50; cf. *Mahābhārata*, I, 75, 3158, sec. 144.
[4] Cf. *Mahābhārata*, I, 75, 3164, 3171-2.
[5] *Buddhacarita*, I, 42; cf. *Mbh.*, I (*anukram*).
[6] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 16; cf. *Saundarananda*, VII, 30.
[7] *S.*, VII, 29.
[8] *Mbh.*, I, 17, 20, 25, 55, 56, 59-60, 75-6, 79, etc.
[9] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 20; *Saundarananda*, VII, 35.
[10] *Mbh.*, I, 71, 2914, 2917, 2918; I, 74, 3056; I, 175, 652, etc.; cf. *Rāmāyana*, IV, 35, 7; I, 65.
[11] Cf. *Saundarananda*, VII, 34; *Rāmāyaṇa*, I, 9, 3; cf. *Mbh.*, I, 2, 443; II, 440; III, 110, 9994; cf. also Nalinikā Jātaka, *Jāt.*, V, pp. 193ff.
[12] Cf. *Mbh.*, 170, *Bhīṣmasatyavatī saṃvāda*; *Mbh.*, I, 104, 4192, 4198.
[13] Cf. *Saundarananda*, I, 4.
[14] Cf. *Mbh.*, XIII, 5668, 7684.
[15] *B.*, VIII, 78; cf. *Harivaṃśa*, 433, 633; *Mbh.*, I, 75, 3126, 3137, 3138, etc.
[16] *S.*, VII, 39; *Mbh.*, I, 75, 2915, 2916, 2918; I, 8, 943-4, 945, etc.
[17] *B.*, I, 10; *Mbh.*, III, 315, 17465.
[18] *Buddhacarita*, I, 10; cf. *Mbh.*, XII, 29, 1030–32.
[19] *Buddhacarita*, I, 10; cf. *Mbh.*, VI, 17, 645—Māndhātṛ is stated to have been taken out by the Aśvins from his father's womb by a surgical operation.
[20] *Saundarananda*, I, 25; *Mbh.*, XII, 29, 1023.
[21] *Saundarananda*, I, 25; cf. *Mbh.*, XI, 661; XII, 60.
[22] *Saundarananda*, I, 26.
[23] *Ibid.*, I, 26; cf. *Mbh.*, I, 68–70.
[24] *Mbh.*, I, 916; I, 1218.
[25] *Saundarananda*, VII, 41; *Mbh.*, I, 95, 3797; I, 99, 3920, 3923, 3965–7.
[26] *Saundarananda*, XI, 48; cf. *Mbh.*, XII, 8142.

twice-born in the methods of Yoga.[1] In the *Buddhacarita* (II, 3),[2] Padma is mentioned as the lord of elephants. Siddhārtha took his delight with the Śākya king's daughter-in-law as the thousand-eyed Indra with Śacī.[3] The Śuddhāvāsa gods placed an old man in front of the prince to incite him to leave his home.[4] God Puraṃdara fell in love with Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama.[5] Sanatkumāra in the third heaven approached Maghavat.[6] The horse Kaṇṭhaka is like that of Tārkṣya in speed.[7] Ugrāyudha met his death at the hands of Bhīṣma.[8] There is a reference to Vṛddha Parāśara in the *Buddhacarita* (XII, 66).[9]

As an inhabitant of Sāketa, Aśvaghoṣa was well acquainted with the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the *Buddhacarita* (I, 43) he refers to Vālmīki as the ādikavi and in the *Saundarananda* [10] he extols him as dhīmān (wise). The narrative of Rāma's journey to the forest and the subsequent return of Lakṣmaṇa to the desolate city bears a striking resemblance to the description given in the *Buddhacarita* of the departure of Siddhārtha and the subsequent return of the charioteer Chandaka to Kapilavastu. In canto VIII of the *Buddhacarita* there are four references from which may be inferred his familiarity with the Ayodhyākāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Similarity in words between the two is conclusive on this point.[11]

The parallelism existing between Aśvaghoṣa and the epic literature on the one hand and Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa on the other may be regarded as marking a period of transition in the development of classical Sanskrit literature. The trend of both the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* with their motif of renunciation naturally brings them more closely into contact with the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Gawronski [12] draws our attention to some references in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. One of these, according to Gurner,[13] is probably taken from the Daśaratha Jātaka and not from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Two references to Vālmīki are, of course, significant in this connection. Gurner argues, however, that the words *Vālmīkirādau ca sasarja padyaṃ* [14] may or may not be a direct allusion to the well-known incident in the *Rāmāyaṇa—mā niṣāda*, etc.[15]. In Cowell's text of the *Buddhacarita* there is a more conclusive evidence in the matter in the word, *Vālmīkinādaś ca*. The allusion to Vālmīki as the tutor of the two sons, in *Saundarananda* (I, 26), points unmistakably to the Uttarākāṇḍa. Similarly, it may be shown that Aśvaghoṣa directly refers to incidents in the *Mahābhārata*.[16] In both the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa, the legend of Mādrī and Pāṇḍu shows the consequence of addiction to women (*B.*, IV, 79; *S.*, VII, 45). As pointed out by Gawronski, the allusion in Aśvaghoṣa's works to Gautama Dīrghatapas

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[1] *Buddhacarita*, I, 45; *Mbh.*, XII, 327, 12282.
[2] *Rāmāyaṇa*, I, 42, 16; *Mbh.*, VI, 2866.
[3] *Buddhacarita*, II, 27; *Rāmayaṇa*, VI, 35, 1; *Mbh.*, III, 113, 10092.
[4] *Buddhacarita*, III, 26; cf. *Divyāvadāna*, 408.
[5] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 72; *Saundarananda*, VII, 25; cf. *Mbh.*, V, 12, 373; XII, 343, 13205.
[6] *Buddhacarita*, V, 27; cf. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII, 26, 2.
[7] *Buddhacarita*, VI, 5; cf. *Mbh.*, VIII, 687; *Divyāvadāna*, 444.
[8] *Buddhacarita*, XI, 18; *Mbh.*, IX, 2, 93; *Harivaṃśa*, 1082.
[9] Cf. *Mbh.*, XII, 8431 foll.
[10] *Saundarananda*, I, 26.
[11] Vide *JPASB*, N.S., Vol. XXIII (1927), pp. 347 foll.
[12] *Studies about the Sanskrit Buddhist Literature*, 1919, pp. 27–39 and *Notes on the Saundarananda*, 1922.
[13] *JPASB*, N.S., Vol. XXIII (1927), pp. 347ff.; cf. *Buddhacarita*, IX, 59, with *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI, cxxviii, 3.
[14] *Buddhacarita*, I, 48.
[15] *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, XV.
[16] *Buddhacarita*, XI, 31 and *Saundarananda*, IX, 17.

also shows the influence of the Sabhāparvan of the *Mahābhārata* (Chap. XXI). The description of the city of Rājagṛha, as given in the *Buddhacarita* (*B.*, X), bears ample testimony to the fact that it is based on a similar description given in the Sabhāparvan of the *Mahābhārata*. The works of Aśvaghoṣa mark a definite stage in the development of kāvya literature from a more or less narrative poem to a series of set pieces on conventional topics. This tendency appears also in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thus barring a few passages of purely Buddhist doctrine, the whole range of topics used by Aśvaghoṣa, whether in the main body of his narrative or incidentally, is found alike in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These topics consist of descriptive passages of purely literary value and fragments of thought from the prevailing body of ideas as expressed in the different schools of philosophy, political and military science, ethics and psychology, grammatical and aesthetic theory, etc. The duties of a king, the technique of an army, the duty of telling unpleasant truths, the moral conflict over the renunciation of vows, the pain of separation and consolation in the transitoriness of the world, are common in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Aśvaghoṣa. Thus the ideal reigns of Daśaratha and Rāma, with the combination of climatic blessings, material prosperity and general goodwill of the people, are also reflected in the conditions of Kapilavastu during the reign of Śuddhodana and after the return of the Buddha (cf. *R.*, I, VI; *R.*, VI, cxviii, 18ff; *B.*, II, 1–16; *S.*, III, 30–41). The allusion to Manu in *Rāmāyaṇa* (I, VI, 4) is also found. The description of the city as given in *Saundarananda* (I, 42–55) is evidently based on the model of *Rāmāyaṇa* (I, V). The hermitages as described in the *Buddhacarita* (VII, 32) and the *Saundarananda* (I, 5–17) are similar in description to those in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (III, 1, 1–9; III, XI, 47–52). The types of asceticism as given in the *Buddhacarita* (VII, 14–18) seem to be an elaboration of the list of technical terms for ascetics as given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (III, VI, 2–5; XII, XCII, 91–93; V, XIII, 38ff.). The nature and tone of Yaśodharā's lament (*B.*, VIII) or Sundarī's lament over desertion by her husband (*S.*, VI, 13–24) are echoed in Tārā's laments (*R.*, IV, XX and XXIII) and Sītā's mourning (*R.*, V, XXV-XXVI and XXVIII). The picture of Sundarī, tearing and throwing her ornaments ('Na bhūṣaṇārtho mama sampratīti sā dikṣu cikṣepa vibhūṣaṇāni'—*Saundarananda*, VI, 28) is the same as that of Kaikeyī (*Ram.*, II, IX, 59). The beautiful description of the contrast in human fortune, which we find in many passages of Kālidāsa, is reflected in the writings of Aśvaghoṣa. The animal-faced demons of Māra, armed with trees and stones, remind us of the hosts of Rāvaṇa and the weapons of the apes. The juxtaposition of animals in the expression—'Yaścaiva nānāvidhaghorarūpaiḥ vyāghroṣṭranāgendramṛgāśvavaktraiḥ' (*R.*, VI, lix, 23) is similar to what we find in the *Buddhacarita* (XIII, 19). The shout of an army and such other noises are described by both.[1] The descriptions of mountains and heavenly gardens to which the Buddha leads Nanda[2] recall similar passages in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[3] The interpretation of nature in terms of human passions, a characteristic feature of classical Sanskrit literature from Kālidāsa to Jayadeva, has its prototype in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[4] The same method is also followed by Aśvaghoṣa when he describes the restlessness of Nanda on his following the Buddha for the first time.[5] Cowell points out that there is a striking resemblance in the description of women

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[1] *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI, xlii, 38, etc., and *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 52ff.

[2] *Saundarananda*, X, 4–14 and 18–31.

[3] V. lvi, 26–50; VII, lxii, 1–16.

[4] E.g. the description of the seasons in *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, xxviii and *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, xxx.

[5] *Saundarananda*, III, 5.

asleep in the palace of Śuddhodana and those in the harem of Rāvaṇa.[1] The festival of Indra's banner may be traced from the *Rāmāyaṇa* through Aśvaghoṣa to Kālidāsa.[2] The sense of dejection at the end of the festival and the general elation when the banner is raised are found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as also in Aśvaghoṣa. The father of Siddhārtha collapses on hearing his son's departure like Daśaratha under similar circumstances.[3]

The didactic passages and allusions which are so numerous in the works of Aśvaghoṣa are also to some extent derived from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Rāmāyaṇa* in passages of fervent appeal rather than of didactic insistence, pauses to dwell on examples from familiar names, such as those of saints who went to heaven, [4] or of faithful wives. [5] The name of Nahuṣa is mentioned to illustrate not the attainment of heaven but the transitoriness of heavenly state. [6] Such topics as the breaking of ascetic vows, [7] the fulfilment of *dharma* by royalty [8] and methods of attaining mokṣa [9] or salvation, etc., have not escaped the attention of Aśvaghoṣa.

Aśvaghoṣa employs the term rājaśāstra for the science of politics and treats as standard authorities the works of Uśanas or Śukra, and Bṛhaspati. The principles of this science upheld by the poet appear to have been based on the *rājadharma* section of the Great Epic. The *Buddhacarita* [10] refers to Udāyin as an authority on *nīti* or the science of worldly conduct and in the *Saundarananda* [11] occurs the word *daṇḍanīti*.

Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita* (II, 4) mentions horses adorned with various auspicious marks.

Ṛṣi Ātreya incidentally finds mention as the first propounder of the science of healing.[12] But from this fact it cannot be inferred that Aśvaghoṣa kept in view Caraka, the legendary court physician of Kaniṣka.

The picture of the pleasures of love drawn by Aśvaghoṣa is marked by that wealth of intimate detail which appeals to all Indian poets. But still more sincere is Aśvaghoṣa's burning enthusiasm for his own ideal. In the *Saundarananda* Nanda's rejection of Sundarī may seem to us heartless; the transference of his fickle affection to the *apsarās* has its comic side but in the end he seeks the welfare of others even as does the Buddha. Rāma on the contrary in his rejection of Sītā after the long agony of separation has no warmer motive than obedience to the doctrine that Cæsar's wife must be above suspicion.[13]

Aśvaghoṣa seems to be acquainted with Kāmaśāstra. He refers to the methods of Yoga in his *Buddhacarita*.[14] The Uttaramīmāṃsā (Vedānta system) and Vaiśeṣika systems were entirely unknown to him. Although there is no specific reference to the Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras, the term *vidhi* is used in the technical sense of this school. There is every reason to believe that Aśvaghoṣa had knowledge at least of the first section of the Nyāyasūtras now extant.

The reference to *kāvyadharma* in the *Saundarananda* shows Aśvaghoṣa's acquaintance with poetics.

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[1] Cf. *Buddhacarita*, V, 47–63 and *Rāmāyaṇa*, V, x, 30–49; V, ix, 33–36 and V xi, 29–36.

[2] Cf. *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, lxxiv, 36; IV, xvi, 37 and 39; IV, xvii, 2, etc., and *Buddhacarita*, I, 63; III, 12; VIII, 73; *Saundarananda*, III, 25; IV, 46.

[3] *Buddhacarita*, VIII, 73; *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, lxxiv, 35.

[4] *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, lxiv, 42.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, cxviii, 10–12, etc.

[6] *Saundarananda*, XI, 42–51 and *Buddhacarita*, XI, 13–18.

[7] *Buddhacarita*, X, 58 and *Saundarananda*, VII, 51.

[8] *Buddhacarita*, IX, 20.

[9] *Ibid.*, XII, 67.

[10] IV, 64.

[11] II, 28.

[12] *Buddhacarita*, I, 43.

[13] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 61.

[14] *Buddhacarita*, I, 45; II, 45 and XII, 105; *vide JRAS*, 1914, pp. 747 foll.

In the *Saundarananda* [1] there is a reference to *śūnyavāda* and the words *śūnya* and *śūnyatā* occur in verses 20 and 17. The theory of *śūnyatā* was evolved in the minds of the teachers who lived long before Nāgārjuna.[2] Aśvaghoṣa's employment of the terms of the theatre and the dramatic forms of address bear testimony to his knowledge of the principles of dramatic technique.

The various kinds of metre employed by him lead us to think that prosody was fully developed in his time. He did not strictly follow the rules of Pāṇini.

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[1] Canto XII, 16–22.

[2] *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 747-748. Cf. Baston, *JA*, 1912, i, 79 foll.; Hultzsch, *ZDMG*, lxxii, 111 foll.; lxxiii, 229 foll.

## CHAPTER III

# AŚVAGHOṢA THE POET

The kāvya poetry as exemplified by Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* and Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṃbhava* and *Raghuvaṃśa* represents a stage in the development of literary art in India which is beyond the earlier stage of poetry of which the two best examples are the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The same remark holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, of Aśvaghoṣa's *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*, Bhāsa's *Pratimānāṭaka* and *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇa* and Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna-Śakuntalaṃ* taking us as they do beyond anything produced in earlier times in the form of dramas.

Aśvaghoṣa was earlier than Kālidāsa and Bhāsa. Keith says that Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* is probably the source of a verse in Bhāsa's *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇa* and its prākrit is unquestionably older in character.[1] It cannot be accepted that Bhāsa stands nearer Aśvaghoṣa in technique than Kālidāsa.[2] Aśvaghoṣa influenced Kālidāsa's style but the chief cause of its perfection must have been natural taste and constant re-working of what he had written. [3] A comparison of the Nāṭyaśāstra with the works of Aśvaghoṣa will show that the Prakrits recognized by the Nāṭyaśāstra are later than those of Aśvaghoṣa.[4]

There were *kavis* in earlier times, many in number, whose personal history is either completely forgotten or imperfectly known. But who were these *kavis* of the earlier ages? The gifted Vedic seers through whose mouth the inspired hymns in the Ṛgveda found their animated utterances were revered as *kavis* and *ṛṣis*, and not inappropriately as *sadvipras*. The Brāhmaṇas of later ages traced the origin of their gotra names to these best of men in whom the poet was inseparably combined with the philosopher, the seer with the teacher and priest. There is then nothing to be surprised at when in the oldest known Sanskrit lexicon of Amarasiṃha the *kavi* or poet is defined by a set of synonyms as a person who is learned, wise, able to judge what is right and wrong, possessed of good understanding, clever in sciences and arts, intelligent, steady in character, talented, endowed with knowledge, prudent man of judgment, deeply versed, sensible, the foremost among men, accomplished, distinguished for culture, an adept, foresighted and far-sighted.[5] Even Aśvaghoṣa himself, while speaking of Vālmīki, pays to him the compliment of being the *ādikavi* (pioneer among poets) and *dhīmān* (sensible). The epithet of *kavi* is applied to both Bṛhaspati and Śukra, the former of whom is eulogized as *vācaspati* (master of speech) and *surācārya* (teacher of the gods), and the latter as kāvya (son of a poet, *kaviputraḥ*) and *kavi* (one who imparts instruction, *kuyate i*).[6] The adjective, *ādi*, is applied where the person is found to be an originator, pioneer or forerunner (*pubbaṅgamo*) of anything, the maker of a school of thought; e.g. the epithets of *āigare* (*ādikaro*) and *titthagare* (*titthakaro*) as applied to

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[1] *Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 93-94.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 292.
[5] *Amarakoṣa*, Brahmavarga, 10:
*vidvān vipaścid dosajñah san sudhiḥ kauvido budhaḥ |*
*dhīro manīṣī jñaḥ prājñaḥ samkhyāvān paṇḍita kaviḥ ||*
*dhīmān surī kṛti kṛṣṭilabdhavarṇo vicakṣanaḥ*
*dūradarśī dīrghadarśī*......................'
[6] *Amarakoṣa*, Svargavarga, 127, 128.

Mahāvīra, the founder of a system of thought; the epithet of *ādividvān* as applied to *ṛṣi* Kapila, and the originator of a new style or school of poetry; the epithet of *ādikavi* as applied to Vālmīki.

Going by all these accepted ideas, a person is not entitled to the epithet of *kavi* or poet if he is not at the same time a seer and a creator (*draṣṭā, sraṣṭā*), a propounder and an instructor, the seer of truth, good and beauty, the creator of a literary art of conveying truth, good and beauty. This two-fold function of a poet is stated by Aśvaghoṣa himself through the following admonition of the Buddha to Nanda:

> Ihottamebhyo 'pi mataḥ sa tūttamo
> ya uttamaṃ dharmamavāpya naiṣṭhikaṃ |
> acintayitvātmagataṃ pariśramaṃ
> śamaṃ parebhyo 'pyupadeṣṭumicchati ||
> Vihāya tasmādiha kāryamātmanaḥ·
> kuru sthirātman parakāryamapyatho |
> bhramatsu sattveṣu tamovṛtātmasu
> śrutapradīpo niśi dhāryatāmayaṃ || [1]

'Here he is considered the best of men who, after obtaining the best and final state of things, desires, unmindful of the personal trouble, to instruct others about tranquillity. Leaving aside, therefore, thy own work, go on doing, thou of steady character, the work for others and hold up this torch of tradition in the darkness of night to the beings who are wandering, being themselves enveloped by darkness.'

Aśvaghoṣa expressly states at the conclusion of his *Saundarananda* that he had not composed the poem for the sake of poetry. Here the form of poetry is subordinated to the nobler purpose of conveying the ultimate truth about salvation and tranquillity. 'This poem, dealing thus with the subject of salvation,' says he, 'has been written in the kāvya style, not to give pleasure, but to further the attainment of tranquillity and with the intention of capturing hearers devoted to other things. For that I have handled other subjects of kāvya poetry to make it palatable, as sweet is put into a bitter medicine to make it drinkable.'

> Yan mokṣāt kṛtamanyadatra hi mayā tat kāvyadharmāt kṛtaṃ |
> pātuṃ tiktamivauṣadhaṃ madhuyutaṃ [2] hṛidyaṃ katham syāditi || —XVIII, 63.

The function assigned by Aśvaghoṣa to the kāvya poetry goes to make it only a handmaid of religion and philosophic thought. If religion and philosophy are concerned with the subject of *śreya* or *niḥśreyas* (*ne pas ultra*) the function of poetry consists in rendering it *preya* or palatable in its form. Evidently this view of the function of poetry was promulgated in the *kāvya-dharma* or work on poetics with which Aśvaghoṣa was acquainted.

There were poets and poetry in the Buddha's time. The Buddha speaks of the four classes of poets, viz. *cintākavi* or the poet of imagination, *sutakavi* or the poet of tradition, *atthakavi* or the poet of set purpose, and *paṭibhāṇa-kavi* or the improvisatore. [3] The Thera Vaṅgīsa (Vāgīśa, same as Vācaspati), who excelled other brothers in the art of extemporizing, describes his previous career as being that of a person who wandered about in the

[1] *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 56, 57.

[2] Cf. Bhāṇaka's *Kaṭubheṣajaṃ*.

[3] *Aṅguttara*, II, p. 230. Cattāro ime bhikkhave kavī. katame cattāro ? *cintākavi, sutakavi, atthakavi, paṭibhāṇakavi.*

country 'drunk with poesy' (*Kāveyyamatto*).[1] There was a grave reason for the Bhikṣu Aśvaghoṣa in describing himself as an *arthakavi*[2]: *mokṣārtha-garbhā kṛtiḥ*.[3] The attaching of undue importance by the mendicants to the poems skilfully composed by outsiders was apprehended by the Buddha as one of the probable causes of future danger to the Good Faith, and the Discourses in which he dwelt on this subject were included by Asoka in the list of the seven texts recommended for constant study and remembrance by all sections of the Buddhist community.

It does not follow from the Buddha's statement that he condemned the art or form of poetry. All that he did was to warn his disciples and followers against being carried away by the emotional appeal of any and every kind of poetry, against sacrificing truth to sentiment. I should better quote the words of the Buddha to indicate what was precisely in the Buddhist traditional background of Aśvaghoṣa's mind and thought.

'There may be, O Brethren, in times to come mendicants of undeveloped body, undeveloped sense (virtue), undeveloped mind, and undeveloped wisdom . . . When those discourses which are delivered by the Tathāgata, which are deep and profound in their meaning, which deal with things extraordinary and which are concerned with matters relating to voidness, are recited, they will not pay attention to them, nor will they give ear nor will they produce a heart to know, nor will they deem them worth learning by heart and studying; when on the other hand, those texts which are composed by the poets, which are in the form of poems (*Kavikatā Kāveyyā*) sweetly worded and sweetly phrased (*cittakkharā cittavyañjanā*) and which are presented by the adherents of another school of thought, are recited, they will pay attention to them, give ear, produce a heart to know, etc. Thus, indeed, O Brethren, from the corruption of the Doctrine will follow the corruption of the Discipline, and *vice versa*. This is, O Brethren, the fourth future danger (to the Good Faith) which has not arisen now but may arise in the long run.'[4]

Evidently in the Buddha's opinion the appeal of a *kāvya* or poem lies to the emotional side of human nature, and that is made through the skilled art of versification, the rhetorical art of embellishment, and the charming phrases and idioms.

To be a poet and a faithful follower of the Buddha at the same time Aśvaghoṣa had no other alternative than to justify his indulgence in the art of poesy on the ground that it was just meant by him to administer sugar-coated quinine pills as a remedy to the epidemic of evil in the world. But he proved himself to be a pre-eminent poet in spite of himself, and while giving an admirable poetic garb to the tenets of salvation which are other-

[1] *Saṃyutta*, I, 110.
*Mandiyā nu sesi udāhu kāveyya-matto* |
*atthā nu te sampacurā na santi* ||
*eko vivitte sayanāsanamhi* |
*niddāmukho kiṃ idaṃ soppasevā ti* ||

[2] According to Rhys Davids the *arthakavi* means 'the poet of real life'.—*Buddhist India*, p. 184.

[3] *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 63.

[4] *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, III, p. 107. *Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave bhavissanti bhikkhū anāgatamaddhānaṃ abhāvitakāyā, abhāvitasīlā, abhāvitacittā, abhāvitapaññā, . . . ye te suttantā Tathāgatabhāsitā gambhīrā gambhīratthā lokuttarā suññatāpaṭisaṃyuttā tesu bhaññamānesu na sussusissanti, na sotaṃ odahissanti, na aññācittaṃ upaṭṭhapessanti, na ca te dhamme uggahetabbam pariyāpuṇitabbaṃ maññissanti, ye pana te suttantā kavikatā kāveyyā cittakkharā cittavyañjanā bāhirakā sāvakabhāsitā, tesu bhaññamānesu sussusissanti, sotaṃ odahissanti, aññācittaṃ upaṭṭhapessanti. . . . Iti kho bhikkhave Dhammasandosā Vinayasandoso, Vinayasandosā Dhammasandoso. Idaṃ bhikkhave catutthaṃ anāgatabhayaṃ etarahi asamuppannam āyatiṃ samuppajjissati.*

wise dull and uninteresting, he had to conform to all the laws and canons of kāvya poetry (*kāvyadharma*) and to adroitly employ all the means of prosody and rhetoric thereby enabling us to judge him as a poet apart from his position and mission as a bhikṣu and religious teacher.

As a poet Aśvagoṣa is revealed to us through his two *kāvyas*, the *Buddhacarita* [1] and the *Saundarananda* [2] while, as a dramatist he stands or falls, in literary estimation by the merit of his *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. The *Buddhacarita-kāvya* records the acts of the Buddha from his birth to his demise. In Pali literature there is a kāvya known as the *Jinacarita* [3] dealing with the life of the Buddha less successfully on the model of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*. Keith is of opinion that none arose to surpass Aśvaghoṣa's achievement in depicting the life of the Buddha.[4] The description of the entrance of the prince in the *Buddhacarita* [5] is similar to that of the actions of the women of the city on the advent of Śiva and Pārvatī in the *Kumārasaṃbhava* [6] and this has also a parallel in the *Raghuvaṃśa* [7] in connection with the entry of Aja and Indumatī.[8] In the third canto of the *Buddhacarita* the descriptions of women with misplaced jewellery (v. 14), of the tumult and clinking of anklets which frightened the birds in the house (v. 15), of the females who were unable to move fast on account of heavy hips and breasts (v. 16), and of the rush of women at the windows whose ear-rings came into contact and whose faces like lotuses were bound into a bundle (v. 21) have their parallels in the *Kumārasaṃbhava* (1, 4 ; III, 55 ; I, 11) and in the *Raghuvaṃśa* (XVI, 56).

A complete Sanskrit text of the *Buddhacarita* is not available. Samuel Beal offers us an English translation of the whole text from its Chinese version which also includes an account of the distribution of Buddha's relics and their enshrinement. In the Chinese version, the text of the *Buddhacarita* [9] consists of twenty-eight cantos while in the Sanskrit text edited by Cowell and subsequently by Johnston the first thirteen cantos only can be claimed to be the composition of Aśvaghoṣa together perhaps with some portions of canto XIV. The remaining four cantos (XIV-XVII) added by Amṛtānanda must be left out of account here.

MM. Shāstrī has compared Cowell's edition of the *Buddhacarita* with the new manuscript which he received. He has noticed a passage consisting

[1] Edited by E. B. Cowell, 1893, and translated by him in *SBE*, Vol. 49; Translated into German by C. Cappeller and R. Schmidt, 1924; into Italian by C. Formichi; Poussin, *JRAS*, 1913, pp. 417–419; L. Finot, *JA*, 1898; E. Hultzch, *ZDMG*, 1918; E. H. Johnston, *JRAS*, 1927, *Buddhacarita* (Acts of the Buddha), Pts. I and II (Text and Translation); Madhava Shastri Bhandari, *Buddhacarita*, cantos II and III, 1929 (Kāvyasārasaṃgraha); C. W. Gurner, *Some textual notes on Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita*, *JASB*, 1926; E. W. Hopkins, *Buddhacarita*, *JAOS*, 1901; Dattatraya Shastri Nigudkar and K. M. Joglekar, *Buddhacarita* (cantos I–V), 1912; Gopal Raghunath Nandargikar, *The Buddhacaritam* (I–V), Poona, 1911; Lokur, *Buddhacaritam* (cantos I–V), 1912; Pandeya Jagannatha Prasad, *Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita*, canto VIII, Bankipore, 1920; V. V. Sovani, *Buddhacaritam*, cantos I–V with notes, Poona, 1911.

[2] Edited by H. P. Shāstrī (*Bibliotheca Indica Series*, 1910; *re-issue* in 1936 by Chintaharan Chakravartty); E. H. Johnston, *Saundaranandakāvya* (Text and Translation); *Saundaranandakāvya*, Bengali Translation, by B. C. Law (1st Ed. 1922 and 2nd Ed. 1923).

[3] B. C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, II, pp. 614 foll. It is a Pali kāvya composed in different metres. It represents a poetic development in Pali similar to that represented by the *Buddhacarita* in the Sanskrit Buddhist literature.

[4] *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 51.

[5] III, 13–24.

[6] VII, 56–69.

[7] VII, 5–13.

[8] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 191; vide B. C. Law, *Saundarananda*, Bengali Tr., Preface.

[9] Vide *Some critical notes on Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita* by J. S. Speyer, *JRAS*, 1914. pp. 105–118.

of 11½ verses which was a lacuna in Cowell's work. The lacuna commences from the middle of the second line of verse 41 in chapter 9 of Cowell's edition. The eleven verses which he has quoted complete the sense of the context. These have been translated in the Chinese version in 16 verses. MM. Shāstrī has given a comparative table of the verses in each canto in the two translations by Cowell and Beal. He has shown from this table that the Chinese translation is a 'free one and not a close translation'.[1]

Johnston[2] points out that Dr. F. Weller[3] has concentrated on producing a correct Tibetan text of the *Buddhacarita* and an accurate translation of it. Johnston admits that he has derived much help from this work although he has not agreed with some of his interpretations. Here he has given his own conjectures regarding some of the variants. He has given a few corroborative references mainly from the Chinese translation, from the *Saundarananda*, from Āryasura's *Jātakamālā* and from Beal's *Romantic Legend of Śākya Buddha* which contains a number of passages taken direct from the *Buddhacarita* especially from canto IX.

We are not prepared to accept the views of Keith and Winternitz that *Saundarananda* was his first attempt.[4] We do not agree with Hultzsch who says that from the concluding verses it may be assumed that Aśvaghoṣa wrote the *Saundarananda* first and the *Buddhacarita* afterwards (*ZDMG*, 72, 121f.). Traces of fully developed kāvya poetry are found in the *Saundarananda* and not in the *Buddhacarita*. Had it been an earlier work, we could not have found such an advanced kāvya poetry in the *Saundarananda* which surely excels the *Buddhacarita* as a piece of poetry. The *Buddhacarita* is essentially the work of an artist. The poet shows his skill in depicting the loving ruses by which the ladies of the harem seek to divert the mind of the prince from the desire to renounce the vanities of the world. Keith says that Aśvaghoṣa was well skilled in the Kāmaśāstra.[5]

The *Buddhacarita* is based either on the *Lalitavistara* or on the same materials and save in its spirit of devotion to the Buddha it is not markedly different from the Hīnayāna as pointed out by Keith.[6]

The *Buddhacarita* has many points of agreement and difference with the *Lalitavistara* traditionally known as a Sarvāstivāda work. Some of the points of agreement are as follows:

On his return from Śuddhodana's palace Asita compassionately enjoined the son of his younger sister (i.e. Naradatta ?) in every way to become the disciple of the sage (Buddha):

> 'Kṛtamatiranujāsutaṃ ca dṛṣṭvā
> munivacanaśravaṇe 'pi tanmatau ca |
> bahuvidhamanukampayā sa sādhuḥ
> priyasutavadviniyojayāñcakāra' ||
> (*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 86.)

Cf. 'Vande tvaṃ varasārthavāha tribhave sarve jage pūjitaṃ
Asitaḥ prāha ca bhāgineya muditaḥ samśrūyatāṃ bhāṣato |
Buddhābodhi yadā śṛṇosi jagato varteti cakraṃ hyayaṃ
Śīghraṃ pravraja śāsane'sya munaye tatprāpsyase *nirvṛtiṃ*' ||
(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., p. 111.)

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[1] *A new manuscript of Buddhacarita*, *JPASB*, 1909, N.S. pp. 47–49.

[2] *JRAS*, 1927, Pt. I, January, pp. 209–226.

[3] *Das Leben des Buddha von Aśvaghoṣa*, Leipzig, 1926—Tibetan text with German translation covering cantos I–VIII.

[4] *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 57; *History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 262.

[5] *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 58; cf. *Buddhacarita* (Cowell), Book XI, vv. 22–34.

[6] *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 227.

Cf. Also '. . . tatra khalvasito maharṣirnaradattaṃ mānavakametadavocat. Yadā Naradatta śṛṇuyā buddho loke utpanna iti tadā tvaṃ gatvā tasya śāsane pravrajeḥ. Tatte bhaviṣyati dīrgharātramarthāya hitāya sukhāyeti' (*Ibid.*, p. 108).

'Attano santikaṃ āgataṃ āha:

Tāta Suddhodanamahārājassa kule putto jāto Buddhaṃkuro, esa pañcatiṃsa-vassāni atikkamitvā Buddho bhavissatīti, tvaṃ etaṃ daṭṭhuṃ labhissasīti, ajj'eva pabbajāhīti.'

(Nidānakathā, *Jātaka*, Vol. I, p. 55.)

Since a universal accomplishment of all objects took place with the birth of Siddhārtha, the newly born baby is named accordingly:

'Evaṃvidhā rājasutasya tasya
Sarvārthasiddhiśca yato babhūva |
Tato nṛpastasya sutasya nāma
Sarvārthasiddho'yamiti pracakre' ||
(*Buddhacarita*, Canto II, verse 17.)

Cf. 'Asya hi jātamātreṇa mama sarvārthaḥ saṃsiddhiḥ. Yannvahamasya Sarvārthasiddha iti nāma kuryāṃ. Tato rājā Bodhisattvaṃ . . . . Sarvārthasiddho'yaṃ kumāro nāmnā bhavatu iti nāmāsyākārṣīt.'

(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., pp. 95ff.)

Cf. 'Jātamātre kumāre 'rthasiddhī sukhī sarvasatvā abhū yāvadavīcim . . . . . . . . utthāpanīyā gāthā:

Jāte jagapradhāne sarve
arthā pradakṣiṇā rājño |
Tena naralambakasya nāmaṃ
Sarvārthasiddha iti || '
(*Mahāvastu*, II, p. 26.)

Assuming the majestic form of an elephant, white like the Himalaya mountain, with six tusks, the Bodhisattva entered the womb of Māyā.

'Dhṛtvā himādridhavalaṃ gur ṣaḍviṣāṇaṃ
dānādhivāsitamukhaṃ dviradasyarūpaṃ |
Śuddhodanasya vasudhādhipatermahiṣyāḥ
kukṣiṃ viveśa sa jagadvyasanakṣayāya' ||
(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 20.)

Cf. 'Himarajata nikāśascandra sūryātirekaḥ
sucaraṇa suvishaktaḥ saḍvisāṇomahātmā
gajabaru dṛḍhasandhi vajrakalpassurūpaḥ
udari mama praviṣṭastasya.' ||
(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., p. 56.)

'Atha Bodhisatto setavaravāraṇo hutvā . . . . . . uttaradisato āgamma rajatadāmavaṇṇāya soṇḍāya setapadumaṃ gahetvā koñcanādaṃ naditvā kanakavimānaṃ pavisitvā mātusayanaṃ tikkhattuṃ padakkhiṇaṃ katvā dakkhiṇapassaṃ tāḷetvā kucchiṃ paviṭṭhasadiso ahosi.'

(Nidānakathā, *Jātaka*, Vol. I, p. 50.)

Cf. also *Mahāvastu*, II, p. 20.

Regarding the unusual way of the birth of Bodhisattva, Aśvaghoṣa speaks thus:

'Pārśvātsuto lokahitāya jajñe
nirvedanaṃ caiva nirāmayaṃ ca'
(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 25.)

Cf. 'Jāte Bodhisattve mātuḥ kukṣipārśvamakṣatam-
anupahatamabhavadyathā pūrvaṃ tathā paścāt'
(*Lalitavistara*, p. 96.)

Cf. again: '. . . adyo jane sarvaloke hitaṃ'
(Ibid., p. 92.)

Cf. also *Nidānakathā*, *Jātaka*, Vol. I, pp. 52-53.

The *Lalitavistara* agrees in toto with the *Buddhacarita*, when Aśvaghoṣa describes that the Bodhisattva's toes and fingers were webbed and that there was a tuft of hair between his brows and that his testicles were withdrawn from sight like those of an elephant:

' . . . Jālāvanaddhāṅgulipāṇipādaṃ
Sorṇabhrubaṃ vāraṇavastikośaṃ . . . . '
(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 65.)

Cf. 'Urṇā . . . . sarvārthasiddhasya kumārasya bhruvormadhye jātā . . . . kośapagatavastiguhyaḥ . . . . jālāṅgulihastapādāḥ'
(*Lalitavistara*, pp. 105ff.)

Bodhisattva's determination to vanquish Māra as we find in the *Buddhacarita* bears a close resemblance with that in the *Lalitavistara*.[1]

The account in the *Buddhacarita* of Siddhārtha bewildering Śuddhodana who tried to dissuade him from renouncing the world is similar to that found in the *Lalitavistara*.[2]

The following are some of the points of disagreement:

'Tasyātiśobhāvisṛtātiśobhā raviprabhevāstatamaḥ prabhāvā |
Samagradevī nivahāgradevī babhūva māyāpagateva Māyā' ||
(Canto I, verse 15.)

The above description of Māyā in the *Buddhacarita* is not to be found in the *Lalitavistara*.

Cf. 'Śuddhodanasya pramadā pradhānā nārīsahasreṣu hi sāgraprāptā
manoramā māyakṛteva vimbaṃ nāmena sā ucyati Māyādevī.'
(Lefmann's Ed., p. 28.)

'Tato mātaraṃ vilokento "Buddhamātā nāma lolā surādhuttā na hoti, kappasatasahassaṃ pana pūritapāramī, jātito paṭṭhāya akhaṇḍapañcasīlāyeva hoti, ayañ ca Mahāmāyā nāma devī edisā, ayañ ca me mātā bhavissatī"-ti.'
(Nidānakathā, *Jātaka*, Vol. I, p. 49.)

According to Aśvaghoṣa the palm of the Buddha was marked with the wheel whereas in the *Lalitavistara* the feet were so marked:

'Cakrāṅkapāṇiṃ sa tathā maharṣir . . . '
(Canto I, verse 64.)

Cf. '. . . tasya tau sucaraṇau cakrāṅkitau śobhanau'
(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., p. 110.)

Cf. also 'Pādatalayormahārāja (Lefmann's Edition reads differently) Sarvārthasiddhasya cakre jāte (R. L. Mitra's edition of *Lalitavistara*, p. 121). Cf. *Buddhavaṃsa*, I, 37—*Yathā tuyhaṃ mahāvīra pādesu cakkalakkhanaṃ.*

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[1] *Buddhacarita*, canto XIII, vv. 1-2. Cf. *Lalitavistara* (Lefmann's Ed.), pp. 299ff. Cf. also Nidānakathā, *Jātaka*, Vol. I, pp. 71-72.

[2] *Buddhacarita*, canto V, vv. 34-35; cf. *Lalitavistara*, (Lefmann's Ed.), p. 199.

In the *Buddhacarita*, Asita controls himself while weeping for not being able to live to see Siddhārtha attaining Buddhahood whereas in the *Lalitavistara* he freely does so:

'Dhātryaṅkasaṃviṣṭamavekṣya cainaṃ
devyaṃkasaṃviṣṭamivāgnisūnuṃ |
Babhūva pakṣmāntarivāñcitāśrurniśvasya
caivaṃ tridivonmukho'bhūt ||

Dṛṣṭvāsitaṃ tvaśrupariplutākṣaṃ
snehāttu putrasya nṛpaścakampe |
Sagadgadaṃ bāṣpakaṣāyakaṇṭhaḥ
papraccha ca prāñjalirānatāṅgaḥ ||

Svalpāntaraṃ yasya vapurmuneḥ syād
vahudbhutaṃ yasya ca janma dīptaṃ |
Yasyottamaṃ bhāvinamāttha cārthaṃ
taṃ prekṣya kasmāttava dhīra vāṣpaḥ' ||

(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verses 66–68.)

Cf 'Pratyatthāya tataḥ kṛtāñjalipuṭo caraṇāni so vandate
aṅke gṛhya mahātmaśāstrakusalīnidhyāyatī prekṣate |
So'pśyadvaralakṣanaiḥ Kavacitaṃ nārāyaṇasthāmavaṃ
śirṣam kampya sa vedaśāstrakuśalo dve tasya paśyadgati ||

Rājā vābhavi cakravarti balavān buddho vā lokottamaḥ
vāṣpaṃ tyakta sudīnakāyamanasi gambhīra niśvasya ca |
udvignaśca vabhūva pārthivavaraḥ kiṃ brāmhaṇo roditi
mā vighnaṃ khalu paśyate'yamasitaḥ sarvārthasiddhasya me ||
Bhītaṃ vyāhara kiṃ tu rodiṣi ṛṣe śreyo'tha kiṃ pāpakaṃ
Pāpaṃ nāsti na cāntārāyamiha bhoḥ sarvārthasiddhasya te'

(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., pp. 110ff.)

In the Jātaka-nidānakathā (I, 55) the sage Kāḷadevala (Asita) freely wept when he perceived that he would not survive to see the Bodhisattva attaining Buddhahood.

'Tato ahaṃ imaṃ Buddhabhūtaṃ daṭṭhuṃ labhissāmi nu kho'ti upadhārento'na labhissāmi, antarā yeva kālaṃ katvā . . . . Arūpabhave nibbattissāmī'ti disvā . . . . 'mahatī vata me jāni bhavissatī 'ti parodi'.

Cf. also *Mahāvastu*, II, p. 32.

The description of Sarvārthasiddha's marriage with Yaśodharā (= *Gopā of the Lalitavistara*) in the *Buddhacarita* is somewhat different from that of the *Lalitavistara* (*Buddhacarita*, Canto II, verses 26-27; cf. *Lalitavistara*, pp. 141, 142 and 159).

*Buddhacarita*—

Kulāttato'smai sthiraśīlasaṃyutātsādhvīṃ vapurhrī vinayopapannāṃ |
Yaśodharāṃ nāma yaśoviśālāṃ tulyābhidhānāṃ śriyamājuhāva ||
(v. 26)

Athāparaṃ bhūmipateḥ priyo'yaṃ Sanatkumārapratimaḥ kumāraḥ |
Sārdhaṃ tayā Śākyanarendravadhvā śacyā sahasrākṣa ivābhireme ||
(v. 27)

Cf. *Lalitavistara*: The Prince was asked about the girl he desired to marry. The priest who was sent to find out a girl of prince's liking met the daughter of Daṇḍapāṇi who gave her consent thus:

'bhaṇahi kumāru yadi kārya mahū vilamba
mā hīnaprākṛtajanena bhaveya vāsaḥ' (p. 141)

'Tell the prince not to make delay (in marrying me). He should not mix with ordinary people.'

The king then arranged for a party where the prince alone had to distribute gifts among the girls present. Gopā, the daughter of Daṇḍapāṇi, who was present there, fixed her steadfast gaze on the Bodhisattva. Then both of them (Gopā and the Prince) thus indulged in courtship:

'Bodhisattvena sarvāṇyaśokabhāṇḍakāni dattāni. Tadā sā (Gopā) Bodhisattvamupasaṃkramya prahasitavadanā Bodhisattvamevamāha:

Kumāra kiṃ te mayāpanītaṃ yastvaṃ māṃ vimānayasi.

Āha: nāhaṃ tvāṃ vimānayāmyapi tu khalu punastvamabhipaścādāgateti. Sa tasyai cānekaśatasahasramūlyamaṅgulīyakaṃ nirmucya prādāt.

Sā prāha: Idamahaṃ kumāra tavāntikādarhāmi.
Āha: Imāni madīyānyābharaṇāni gṛhyantām.
Sā āha: na vayaṃ kumāraṃ vyalaṃkariṣyāmaḥ
Alaṃkariṣyāmo vayaṃ kumāraṃ' (p. 142)

Those who were engaged by the king to watch them in secret reported to the king thus:

'Deva Daṇḍapāṇeḥ Śākyasya duhitā Gopā nāma śākyakanyā tasyāṃ kumārasya caksurniviṣṭaṃ muhūrtaṃ ca tayoḥ saṃlāpo'bhūt.' (p. 142)

On hearing this the king approached Daṇḍapāṇi and allowed the prince to marry Gopā:

'Yathā ca putro mama bhūṣito guṇaiḥ
Tathā ca kanyā svaguṇā prabhāsate |
Viśuddhasattvau tadubhau samāgatau
*sameti sarpiryathā sarpimaṇḍe* || *(p. 159)*

The *Saundarananda kāvya* which is chronologically later than the *Buddhacarita* is a poem consisting of eighteen cantos. As a piece of poetry it excels the *Buddhacarita*. It is undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy specimens of Sanskrit kāvya literature. Its earlier cantos contain a kind of resumé of the *Buddhacarita* [1] which means that the latter poem is presupposed by it, and not *vice versa*. It has for its theme the Buddhist story of conversion by the Buddha of his step-brother Nanda who was married to Sundarī, a rare female beauty of her time. No Tibetan translation has as yet been found of this poem. A Buddhist work translated by Beal from the Chinese under the title of the *Romantic Legend of Śākya Buddha* not only contains a version of the story of Nanda's conversion suggesting an acquaintance with Aśvaghoṣa's narrative but also lays the *Buddhacarita* in its earlier part frequently under contribution.

MM. Dr. Haraprasad Shāstrī in his paper entitled 'The Recovery of a Lost Epic by Aśvaghoṣa' says that a new ancient epic poem entitled *Saundarananda-kavya* written by Aśvaghoṣa, a great poet, musician and philosopher of the first century of the Christian era, who was the spiritual preceptor of the greatest Indo-Scythian monarch Kaniṣka, has been discovered. Aśvaghoṣa was the first great writer of the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism and the author of the first artistic epic in Sanskrit, the *Buddhacarita*. He says that it was not known whether he had written any other great work in poetry though some beautiful songs are attributed to him by the Chinese and the Tibetans. The style of the new poem *Saundarananda-kāvya* is the same as that of the *Buddhacarita*; the sentiments, the religious teaching, the boldness in deviating from the rules of Pāṇini and the versification and the language are the same. This poem deals with the great love

[1] *JASB*, N.S., Vol. V, 1909.

which Nanda, half-brother of Buddha, bore for his wife Sundarī. Then it describes how Buddha took Nanda to his hermitage and made him a mendicant. Nanda was anxious to return to the world and to his wife, but Buddha always persuaded him to persist in his mendicant life. Now this spiritual struggle between Buddha and his royal disciple forms the central point of interest of this fascinating epic. During the course of this struggle Buddha takes him to heaven and shows that even heaven should not be worthy of one's desire and ends the work by giving a taste of the nectar of *Nirvāṇa*. In the first chapter Aśvaghoṣa gives a description of Kapilavastu as a great hermitage. In the last colophon, Aśvaghoṣa the author is described as a Bhadanta, as a Sāketaka, meaning born at Sāketa or Ayodhyā and as Suvarṇākṣaputra. The same colophon is given in the Tibetan version of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*. So we see that there is no doubt as to the authorship of these two works *Saundarananda* and *Buddhacarita*. A complete work of *Buddhacarita* in original Sanskrit has not yet been obtained anywhere. Dr. Shāstrī says that he at first thought the *Saundardnanda-kāvya* to be another name for the lost portion of the *Buddhacarita*, but all his doubts have been dispelled by a comparison of Beal's translation of the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda-kāvya*. In 1907 he saw a palm leaf manuscript of this poem. The first line is complete. Several letters of the second have disappeared in the centre, many more of the third and subsequent lines. He then got a paper manuscript from the Librarian of the Nepal Durbar Library and had it copied. Thanks to the efforts of MM. Dr. Shāstrī to discover this excellent work of Aśvaghoṣa; we have it now in toto published in the *Bibliotheca Indica series* (No. 1251, 1910 and re-issued in 1939 No. 1524) of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

C. W. Gurner in his Notes on the Text of Aśvaghoṣa's *Saundarananda* [1] has given his own interpretations of some passages of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* in order to make the meaning clear. Some of his interpretations no doubt help to improve the meaning as in *Saktaḥ* (7th sarga, verse 20) in place of *Śaktaḥ*. In the 4th sarga, 14th śloka, he has drawn the readers' attention to the *Raghuvaṃśa* (VII, 68) which suggests vāṣpena for vātena. In the 13th sarga, verse 22, he suggests *samvedaḥ* (*saṃvedaḥ saṃvido jñānadarśanaṃ*) in place of *samvegaḥ*.[2] In the 14th sarga, verse 48, his suggestion to read *kṛṣṭodgatā* ('straying into the cultivated field') in place of *kṛṣṭādako* is good (*kṛṣṭādako gauriva śasyamadhyāt*). In the 9th sarga, verse 34, his reading of *balavān* in place of *karavān* is appropriate. Aśvaghoṣa has used the word *balavān* in verse 60 of the 15th sarga of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* as pointed out by Gurner—'*Prasūtaḥ puruṣo loke śrutavān balavānapi*'.

Aśvaghoṣa's predilection for subjects dealing with conversion may be taken to suggest a personal reason. The revery of thought may even go so far as to presume that the poet has revealed his own personal history through the career of Nanda which he masterfully delineated.

The doctrine of vacuity (*śūnyatā*) has been alluded to in the *Saundarananda-kāvya* [3] which incidentally gives much information on the faith and the same doctrine together with the distinction of absolute and apparent truth is found in another treatise attributed on Chinese authority to Aśvaghoṣa.[4]

[1] *JRAS*, 1928, Pt. I—January, pp. 131-132.
[2] *Vairāgyasyāpi samvegaḥ saṃvido jñānadarśanāsu.*
[3] Cf. Baston, *JA*, 1912, I, 79ff.; Hultzsch, *ZDMG*, LXXII, 111ff., LXXIII, 229ff.
[4] *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 747 foll.

Poussin says that H. P. Shāstrī and M. A. Baston [1] assume that Aśvaghoṣa's *Saundarananda-kāvya* is a Mahāyāna work. He does not see any evidence in favour of this view. Whether the author of the *Buddhacarita*, the *Saundarananda* and the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* (translated from the Chinese by E. Huber, Paris, 1908) is also the author of the *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda* is by no means evident. It is clear that there is no tinge of Mahayanism in the *Saundarananda*.[2]

The *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* of which only a few passages are extant in a central Asian manuscript is found to be a nine act play, having the story of the conversion of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana for its theme. It deals with the events which led up to the conversion of the young Maudgalyāyana and Śāriputra by the Buddha and some of the incidents are certain. Śāriputra had an interview with Aśvajit, then he discussed the question of the claims of the Buddha to be a teacher with his friend, the Vidūṣaka, who raised the objection that a Brahmin like his master should not accept the teaching of a Kṣatriya. Śāriputra repels the objection. Maudgalyāyana greets Śāriputra asking him the cause of his glad appearance and learns his reasons. The two go to the Buddha who receives them and who foretells to them that they will be the highest in knowledge of the Buddha's disciples. In this point there is a deliberate and artistic deviation from the ordinary version of the incident followed in the *Buddhacarita* in which the prophecy of the Buddha is addressed not to the disciples themselves but to others of the Buddha's followers. The end of the play is marked by a philosophic dialogue between Śāriputra and the Buddha which includes a polemic against the belief in the existence of a permanent self; it terminates in the praise of his two new disciples by the Buddha and a formal benediction.[3]

The most remarkable thing regarding the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* is its close correspondence to the classical type of drama as laid down in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is a *prakaraṇa* and has nine acts, which accords perfectly with the rule of the Śāstra. The acts bear no titles. This is in accordance with the normal usage. The hero is Śāriputra who corresponds to the Brahmin hero of the Śāstra and who is of the noble and calm type. Whether the heroine was a lady or a *hetæra* we do not know. The Buddha and his disciples speak Sanskrit and use both prose and verse and the Vidūṣaka speaks Prakrit. The presence of this figure is a remarkable proof of the steady character attained by the drama. There is nothing more absurd than that a youthful ascetic seeking after truth should be troubled by one who is a proper attendant on a wealthy merchant, Brahmin or a minister. Aśvaghoṣa wrote a type of drama in which the rôle of such characters was too firmly embedded to permit its omission. In the story of the drama now lost to us the Vidūṣaka was introduced for comic relief. He disappears from the last act where Śāriputra had no need as a member of the Buddhist fraternity for a jester. We find a clear discrepancy between Aśvaghoṣa's practice and that of the later drama only in one point. In the later drama we find that the phrase *ataḥparaṃ api priyaṃ asti* occurs but in the drama of Aśvaghoṣa this phrase is omitted and the benediction proceeds without prelude with the word spoken by the Buddha: 'from now on shall these two ever increase their knowledge, restraining their senses to gain release.' It appears that Aśvaghoṣa did not recognize the traditional usage. He was

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[1] *JA*, 1912, I, pp. 79–100.

[2] *Critical notes to Saundarananda-kāvya* by L. V. Poussin in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London Institution, Vol. I (1917–1920), pp. 133–140.

[3] The conversion of Śāriputra and his friend Maudgalyāyana is also related in the *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinayapiṭaka*, I (PTS), pp. 39 foll.

acquainted with the usage and he had the power to vary it in case of need. In the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* we find the allegorical figures of *buddhi* (wisdom), *kīrti* (fame), and *dhṛti* (firmness), appearing and conversing. This is followed by the advent of the Buddha himself adorned with the halo. In this drama we find the *hetæra* named Magadhavatī, a Vidūṣaka named Komudhagandha, a hero named Nāyaka, a Duṣṭa (rogue), a maid-servant, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. The drama is doubtless intended for the purposes of religious edification. It is too fragmentary to show that the author was possessed of humour. The drama alludes to an old garden as the place where part of the action passed as in the *Mṛcchakaṭikā* and the house of the *hatæra* served as the scene of another part of the action. The drama shows close agreement with the classical model as the name of Vidūṣaka shows. The name of the *hatæra* does not observe the rule exemplified in the *Cārudatta*. The fact that the Duṣṭa and the Nāyaka appear by these titles only has a parallel in the *Cārudatta* and the *Nāgānanda*, a Buddhist drama of Harṣa.

In this drama we find the Buddha, his disciples, the hero of the *hatæra* play, and Dhanañjaya speaking Sanskrit which is faulty. The errors in Sanskrit are Prakritisms. There is no doubt that the Sanskrit is excellent and the fragments show traces of able versification and the style of Aśvaghoṣa. The other characters speak Prakrit. Three different forms of Prakrit may be distinguished: the first spoken by the Duṣṭa (rogue), the second by the mysterious Gobaṃ and the third by the *hetæra* and the Vidūṣaka. The Duṣta's speech is generally similar to the Māgadhī of the Prakrit grammarians. The Prakrit of the Gobaṃ agrees with the old Māgadhī in having *l* for *r* and *e* in the nominative singular, but it reduces all sibilants to '*s*'. Other points of similarity are the retention of the dental for cerebral in *vaṇṇa*, the lengthening of the vowel before the suffix '*k*', the accusative plural neuter in *pupphā* and the infinitive '*bhumjitaye*'. Śaurasenī is ascribed to the *hetæra* by the Śāstra which gives prācya or eastern dialect to the Vidūṣaka. There is no softening or omission of intervocalic consonance as in the other Prakrits of the drama. In the words of the *hetæra* the word *Surada* occurs with softening of *t* to *d*. In the dialect of the Duṣṭa we have a form *makkaṭaho* which may be genitive as in Apabhraṃśa. It is interesting to study the language of the drama which contains many archaic features of Pali and the dialects of the older inscriptions. The drama of Aśvaghoṣa has no clear evidence of Mahārāṣṭrī at all. Ardhamāgadhī is prescribed for slaves (*ceṭas*), *rājaputras*, and guildsmen (*śreṣṭhino*).[1]

The fragments of the two plays have been found by Lüders,[2] along with those of Aśvaghoṣa's *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. The first of them appears to be a Buddhist allegory and the second one is concerned with the love affair of a young nāyaka called Somadatta ending probably in his conversion to the Buddhist faith.

The fragment of the allegorical play contains rhymes composed much in Aśvaghoṣa's style. If the surmise that Somadatta's love affair ended in his conversion to Buddhism be correct, the plot of the second play is based on a story which is substantially the same as that of Aśvaghoṣa's *Saundarananda-kāvya*. 'The motif of the lover holding his mistress's mirror' forms a central point in both. But the occurrence of three verses in the *Sragdharā* metre which became popular with later Buddhists, specially those of Kashmir, goes against connecting the second play with any of

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[1] Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 336. Cf. *Udāna*, *Nandavagga*, III, 2, pp. 21 foll.

[2] *Bruchstücke Buddhistischer Dramen* (1911); Sitzungsberichte der Königl Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.

the three known works of Aśvaghoṣa. The occurrence of two verses in the *Hariṇī* metre and one in the *Āryā* goes alike against the presumption as to the second play being a work of Aśvaghoṣa (Johnston, *The Buddhacarita*, II, Intro., pp. xviii ff.). According to Levi, Aśvaghoṣa was the author of a lyrical drama treating the legends of Rāṣṭrapāla (*JA*, 213, 1928, pp. 200 foll.).

Aśvaghoṣa's indebtedness for phrases and idioms, thoughts and ideas becomes greater and more palpable when we consider his kāvyas in reference to the two epics and the earlier Buddhist works. As regards the Great Epic, Johnston would, for the striking parallels, draw our attention particularly to the story of Nala and the *Bhagavadgītā*. One may observe that it was not only the *Gītā* but the *Gītāmāhātmya* as well which was in the literary background of Aśvaghoṣa's works. In the *Saundarananda* (XVIII, 11) Nanda says that he had all his desires appeased after the drinking, like a calf from the cow, of the Buddha's teaching, 'with the teats of benevolence, the beautiful dewlap of clear expression, the milk of the good law and the horn of imagination'.

Maitrīstanīṃ vyañjana-cārusāsnāṃ saddharmadugdhāṃpratibhāna-śṛṅgāṃ |
tavāsmi gāṃ sādhu nipīya tṛpta-tṛṣeva gāmuttamavatsavarṇaḥ ||

This reminds us at once of the stanza 5 in the *Gītāmāhātmya* which reads:

sarvopaniṣado gāvo, dogdhā Gopāla-nandanaḥ |
Pārtho vatsaḥ, sudhir bhoktā, dugdhaṃ Gītāmṛtaṃ mahat ||

It may be rightly pointed out that some of the verses of the *Saundarananda* are no doubt good sayings. As a piece of poetry the *Saundarananda* excels the *Buddhacarita*. It is not wanting in high poetic excellence. The style is very graceful. It contains beautiful similes which amply testify to the fact that Aśvaghoṣa was a great poet. It contains some peculiar nominal and verbal forms.[1] In the two kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa cognate accusative is found frequently especially with verbs meaning to speak. Upasarga '*prati*' has been used with the accusative to denote the various case relations. The locative is used with a number of substantives and adjectives in various case-ideas. The absolute genitive does not occur in the *Saundarananda*. The perfect participle is used both as an adjective and a finite verb. The past participles are generally used with a finite verb. The passive imperative is also found. The conjunctive has sometimes been used ungrammatically. Some phrases and idioms occur frequently in the *Saundarananda*. Finite verbs are often used. Desiderative formations may be noticed. Yamaka is not rare in Aśvaghoṣa's works (*Praṇaṣṭavatsyām iva vatsalāṃ gāṃ*). Aśvaghoṣa adopts the *udgatā* for Canto III of the *Saundarananda*.[2] The Suvadanā and the Vardhamāna species of the upasthitapracupita are also found.[3]

The metres employed by Aśvaghoṣa are very numerous. At the time of Aśvaghoṣa the distinction between prose and verse, essentially lyric in type, was fixed and the elaborate structure of the verse normally with

[1] *JPASB*, N.S., Vol. XXVI, 1930, 181ff.
[2] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 63-64.
[3] Cf. *Saundarananda*, II, 65; Jacobi, *ZDMG*, XXXVIII, 603.
*udvegātpunarbhave manaḥ praṇidhāya*
*sa yayau śayitavarāṅganādanāsthaḥ* |
*niśi nṛpatinilayanādvanagamanakṛtamanāḥ*
*sarasa iva mathitanalinātkalahaṃsaḥ* ||

four lines of equal length and identic structure rendered it quite unsuitable as a medium of conversation.[1]

Gurner [2] in dealing with the style of Aśvaghoṣa points out that it is a mixture of naive effort and artificial embellishment. Aśvaghoṣa often builds up his lines in well-knit descriptive phrases which lack the harmony of the later kāvyas and recall the elaborate descriptive passages in the epic literature. Sometimes he gives a long series of nouns or verbs for the sake of mere emphasis and we notice an incessant stream of *anuprāsa* (synonyms), *yamaka*, and simple puns typical of an early stage in the development of *Alaṅkāra*. His style differs widely from that of the epic but its leading features are undoubtedly epic in character. Thus '*kṛtsnaṃ kṛtaṃ me kṛtakāryya kāryyaṃ*',[3] '*Kulasya nāndijananaśca nandaḥ*',[4] and '*Kācit-padmavanādetya sapadmā padmalocanā padmavaktrasya pārśve'sya padma-śrirīva tasthuṣī*' [5] are epic in fashion and as such insipid in comparison with the style of the later kāvyas. Laboured construction and the practice of piling up verbs and nouns as we find in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (IV, xxviii, 27) may be found in Aśvaghoṣa.[6] The use of hyperboles and rhetorical repetition of the concluding pāda of a śloka are also common in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in the works of Aśvaghoṣa.[7] The doubling of the gerundive verb [8] has its parallels in the epic.[9]

The grammatical usage of Aśvaghoṣa stands between that of the epics and of Kālidāsa. The self-expression in Aśvaghoṣa's poetry gave the introspective thought a place in literary Sanskrit.[10]

Although the Jātaka version of the story of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga is almost the same as that in the great epic, Aśvaghoṣa's allusion to it with the express mention of the king's daughter as Śāntā by her name,[11] presupposes the legend in the two epics. The tradition of Tālajaṅgha as alluded to by Aśvaghoṣa differed from that in a stanza incorporated in Kauṭilya's *Artha-śāstra* :

rakto girermūrdhani Menakāyāṃ
kāmātmakatvācca sa Tālajaṅghaḥ |
pādena Viśvāvasunā saroṣaṃ vajreṇa
hintāla ivābhijaghne ||
(*S.*, VII, 39.)

kopāj Janamejayo Brāhmaṇeṣu vikrāntaḥ
Tālajanghaś ca Bhṛguṣu.
(*Arthaśāstra*, I, 6.)

The stanzas cited in the *Arthaśāstra*, I, 6, refer to the destruction of Dāṇḍakya Bhoja and Karāla Vaideha on account of a lascivious attempt (kāmāt) on a Brahmin maiden, while the Jātakas preserve a tradition which accounts differently for the destruction of king Daṇḍaki. It is yet to be ascertained what were precisely the sources of the legends of Hiraṇyaretas and Svāhā, Indra and Ahalyā, Sūrya and Saraṇyū, Vaivasvata and Agni,

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1 Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 90.
2 *JPASB*, N.S., Vol. XXIII (1927), pp. 347–67.
3 *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 10.
4 *Ibid.*, IV, 6.
5 *Buddhacarita*, IV, 36.
6 *Saundarananda* VI, 34; *Buddhacarita*, V, 42; *Saundarananda*, XVII, 59.
7 Cf. *Buddhacarita*, IX, 68; VIII, 46; XI, 23; *Rāmāyaṇa*, III, XXXVII, 37–54; V., xlii, 18
8 *Saundarananda*, VI, 27.
9 *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, XXVIII, 22.
10 *JPASB*, N.S., Vol. XXIII, 1927, pp. 347–67.
11 *Saundarananda*, VII, 34.

Vaśiṣṭha and Akṣamālā, Parāśara and Kālī, Dvaipāyana and a harlot in Kāśī, Aṅgiras and Sarasvatī, Dilīpa, Kāśyapa and a divine damsel, Aṅgada and Yamunā, Gādhin and Ghṛtācī, Sthūlaśiras and Rambhā, Pramadvarā and a serpent, Budha's son and Urvaśī, Jahnu and his wife, Śantanu and Gaṅgā, Somavarman, Saunandakin and Urvaśī, Bhīmaka-Senāka and his wife, Janamejaya and Śantanu's widow, Pāṇḍu and Mādrī, alluded to by Aśvaghoṣa in his kāvyas.[1] Similarly one has got to find out the source of the allusion to the cause of the destruction of the Kurus, Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis, and the Mekhala-Daṇḍakas.

If the *Buddhacarita* be the earlier of the two kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa, as it undoubtedly is, two questions are apt to arise in this connection: (1) What is the earlier model on which it was based? (2) Whether or not its Sanskrit text in Cowell's edition represents the Indian original of its Chinese version bearing the title of *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*? It is easy to answer the second question in the affirmative. By comparing the English renderings of the Sanskrit text and the Chinese version none can help coming to the conclusion that if the Indian original of the Chinese version differed anywhere from the former, it must have been on some minor points of variation in readings.

As to the earlier model, it is found in neither of the two great Sanskrit epics nor in any other Brahmanical or Jaina work. Our attention has been drawn to the stanzas constituting the prologue to the *Nālaka Sutta* in the *Sutta-nipāta*, suggesting that this prologue of which the composition was a matter of accident served as the earlier literary model for a consistent self-conscious attempt on the part of Aśvaghoṣa for the production of a magnificent kāvya on the life of the Buddha.[2]

The original title of the *Nālaka Sutta*, as given in Asoka's Bhabru Edict, is *Moneyya Sutta*. The prologue (*Vatthugāthā*), while supplying the historical context to this discourse, incidentally narrates the visit of Ṛṣi Asita, the Indian Simeon, to Kapilavastu to see the newly born Bodhisattva in the house of king Śuddhodana, and to predict his future greatness as a Perfect Buddha. The self-same theme is poetically dealt with in the *Mahāvastu* (II, pp. 33–43), as well as in the *Lalitavistara* (VII). This is treated also in a magnificent kāvya like the *Buddhacarita*.[3] So far as the *Mahāvastu* is concerned, the mixed Sanskrit counterpart of the Pali *Nālaka Sutta* is presented apart from the story of Asita. Three stages in the development of the Sutta concerned are apparent. In the first stage it passed off till the time of Asoka as the *Moneyya Sutta* without the historical context bringing in Nālaka as the interlocutor. In the second, it came to bear, with the context supplied, the title of *Nālaka Sutta*. And in the third the prologue appeared with the Nālaka context expanded into a distinct poem on the rôle of Asita in the life of the Buddha.

The three poets dealt independently with the same theme with a common Buddhist legend behind them, producing three poems of distinctive literary effect. The prose legend which is met with in the *Jātaka Nidānakathā*[4] may be treated as a common presupposition of them all.

[1] *Saundarananda*, VII, 25–45; *Buddhacarita*, IV, 79.

[2] Barua, *Old Brāhmī Inscriptions in the Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri Caves*, p. 172.

[3] See J. Muir's instructive article—*Asita and Buddha or the Indian Simeon* in *IA*, 1878, Sept., Bapat's edition of the *Sutta-nipāta*, p. 102.

[4] Fausboll's *Jātaka*, I, pp. 54f. It is not claimed that the legend as narrated in the *Nidānakathā* is itself anterior to the Prologue to the *Nālaka Sutta*. All that is suggested above is that what the form of the earlier prose legend might be, can be inferred from the Nidāna version.

Pali *Nālaka Sutta—vatthugāthā*, 8-9; *Sutta-nipāta* (PTS), p. 133.

Tato kumāraṃ jalitaṃ iva suvaṇṇaṃ
ukkāmukhe va sukusala-sampahaṭṭhaṃ |
dadallamānaṃ siriyā anomavaṇṇam
dassesu puttaṃ Asitavhayassa Sakyā ||
Disvā kumāraṃ sikhiṃ iva pajjalantaṃ
tārāsabhaṃ va nabhasigamaṃ visuddhaṃ |
suriyaṃ tapantaṃ sarada-r-iv'abbhamuttaṃ
ānandajāto vipulaṃ alattha pītiṃ ||

*Mahāvastu*, II, p. 38, vv. 52–54:

Svāgatamanurāgataṃ te supto
tāvat priyadarśi kumāro |
drakṣyasi tvaṃ pratibuddhaṃ
vigrahaṃ iva jātarūpasya ||
Pratibuddhaṃ ca kumāraṃ praveṇiyam
aṣṭamaṅgalakṛtāyam |
upanāmayi mātusmā ghanavivarakṛtaṃ va ādityam ||
Dṛṣṭvāna taṃ ṛṣivaro kuṇḍalamiva
paṭṭakambalanyastaṃ |
abhyutthahitva tvaritaṃ aṃkena
pratīcchati kumāraṃ ||

*Lalitavistara*, VII, p. 110:

Sādhu svāgatu yācase kilamitaḥ prīto'smi te darśanāt
Eṣo'sau śayitaḥ kumāra varado draṣṭuṃ na śakyo'dhunā |
Sādhu tāva muhūrtamāgama ihā yaddrakṣhyase nirmalaṃ
Candraṃ vā yatha pūrnamāsi vimalaṃ tārāgaṇairmaṇḍitaṃ ||
Yad cāsau pratibuddhah sārathivaraḥ paripūrṇa Candraprabhaḥ
Tadarājā pratigṛhya vanhivapuṣaṃ sūryātirekaprabhaṃ |
hantā paśya ṛṣe nṛdevamahitaṃ hemāgravimbopamaṃ
Asito dṛṣṭa ca tasya tou sucaraṇau cakrāṃkitou śobhanau ||

The metre used in the stanzas cited from the *Vatthugāthā* conforms more to the Rucira than to the Praharṣiṇī variety of the Atijagati class. That employed in the stanzas from the *Mahāvastu* must be broadly classed under Paṃkti, while the metre of the *Lalitavistara* gāthās stands midway between the Bṛhati and Paṃkti classes. The metre of the stanzas from the *Buddhacarita* is obviously an Upajāti variety of Triṣṭhubh. Although the Pali stanzas are in the Atijagati metre and those of the *Buddhacarita* in the Upajāti, in wording, general movement, music, and rhythm, there is a closer resemblance between the *Vatthugāthā* and the *Buddhacarita*.

The Pali lines—

*Tato kumāraṃ jalitaṃ iva suvaṇṇaṃ*
*ukkāmukhe 'va sukusala-sampahaṭṭaṃ* |
*dadallamānaṃ siriyā anomavaṇṇaṃ*

were clearly in the background of Aśvaghoṣa's lines.

*Buddhacarita*, III, 23:

*Dṛṣṭvā ca taṃ rājasutaṃ striyastā jājvalyamānaṃ vapuṣā śriyā ca*

*Ibid.*, I, 55:

*Taṃ Brahmavid Brahmavidaṃ jvalantaṃ Brāhyā śriyā caiva*

Upajāti is the metre which is abundantly used by Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita*. The monotonous effect of its trochaic cadence in a continuous narrative is sought to be effected by the changes on the possible variations of rhythm. The other metres employed in the two kāvyas consist of Anuṣṭubh, Vamśastha, Rucirā, Praharṣiṇī, Vasantatilakā, Śarabhā, Mālinī, Śikhariṇī, Kusumitalatāvellitā, Śārdūlavikrīḍita and Suvadanā among the Samavṛttas, Viyoginī or Sundarī, Aupacchandasika, Aparavaktra or Vaitālīya and Puṣpitāgrā among the Ardhasamavṛttas, and Udgatā and Upasthitapracupita among the Viṣamavṛttas. An example of Śālinī is met with in the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra* is the only other work where we have a description of the metre called Śarabhā. Aśvaghoṣa has skilfully employed Udgatā and Upasthitapracupita among difficult metres. The employment of the Vipulā in the ślokas contained in the two kāvyas, which fell out of use in classical kāvya, keeps the works nearer to the *Great Epic* in which it is common enough. The metre Mandākrāntā does not occur in the *Saundarananda* and in the *Buddhacarita*. Fifteen metres have been used in the *Saundarananda*. Aśvaghoṣa's style is of the Vaidarbha type.[1] It is simple. Aśvaghoṣa is at his best in simple and elegant description. The proportion of Vipulās to Pathyās about 11·7 per cent is much lower than this in the Nala and slightly less, according to Hopkins,[2] than the general average of the *Mahābhārata*, while it is more than half of the corresponding figure in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*.[3]

Aśvaghoṣa's treatment of the legend of Ṛṣi Asita in his *Buddhacarita* takes us beyond the stage in the development of poetry which is represented by the *gāthās* in the Pali *Vatthugāthā*, the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu*. The same conclusion is to be drawn from the fully developed character of the prosodical system of kāvya in Aśvaghoṣa's poems. The question arises—was such a development of Sanskrit kāvyas historically possible in the first century A.D.?

The writing of kāvyas in conformation to the definite rules of prosody and canons of kāvya poetry in the Kuṣāṇa age is not historically an impossibility. The Junāgarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I dated A.D. 150 bears a clear testimony to the development of the science of rhetoric and prosody, and no less that of poetics. It is here for the first time that we have the following account of the proficiency of a ruling prince in these sciences and arts: *Sphuṭa-laghu-madhura-citra-kānta-śabda-samayodārālamkṛta-gadya-padya-kāvyavidhāna-pravīṇena pramāṇa-mānonmāna-svara-gati-varṇa-sārasatvādibhiḥ parama-lakṣaṇa-vyamjanair-upeta-kānta-mūrtinā-svayam-adhigata-Mahākṣatrapa-nāmnā.*

The *kāvya-vidhāna* of this dated epigraphic record is the same word as the *kāvya-dharma* of our poet. Here, however, we are not concerned with Indian poets in general but with a Buddhist poet in particular. When *precisely was classical Sanskrit adopted by the Buddhists as the vehicle of* expression?

Since Professor D. R. Bhandarkar seriously doubted the rise of the Buddhist sects before the reign of Aśoka on the evidence of his Schism Pillar Edict, it is maintained[4] that the names of the sects appear in the inscriptions that date from the first century B.C. to the second or third century A.D. According to the *Dīpavamsa*,[5] each sect with its rise changed the original texts, their arrangement, language and interpretation. The

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[1] Keith, *Hist. of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 60.
[2] *Great Epic of India*, pp. 223-24.
[3] Johnston, *Acts of the Buddha*, Introduction, p. lxiii ff.
[4] Barua, *Asoka and His Inscriptions*, Pt. I, Ch. IX.
[5] Oldenberg Ed., V, vv. 32–50.

language of the *gāthās* in the *Mahāvastu* and the *Lalitavistara* is a kind of mixed Sanskrit, Prakrit with Sanskritic tendency or Sanskrit retaining its Prakrit legacy. According to a Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the text of the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* was recited in Apabhraṃśa by the Sammitiyas, in Sanskrit by the Sarvāstivādins, in a corrupt (mixed) dialect by the Mahāsaṅghikas and in Paiśācī by the Sthaviras. These are precisely the four languages which find mention in the *Mahāvyutpatti* (p. 64). The bearing of this evidence on the point at issue is still uncertain. The utmost the tradition wants to say is that the Sarvāstivādins preferred to have their scriptural texts in Sanskrit. But the prose portions of both the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu*, the former of which was a work of the Sarvāstivādins and the latter that of the Mahāsaṅghikas, go to establish that from a certain date the prevailing tendency of all the Buddhist sects was to Sanskritize the texts from an earlier diction which was allied more or less to Pali and Prakrit. The evidence of the various inscriptions in which the Buddhist sects are mentioned goes only to show that the official language of India tended, as time went on, to be more and more Sanskritic from an earlier Prakrit stage until it was completely replaced by Sanskrit throughout India in the Gupta age. [1] Such a culmination of the process of linguistic transformation in official documents was undoubtedly reached for the first time in the Junāgarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I in the middle of the second century A.D. But the Sanskrit praśastis (royal panegyrics) composed by the court poets in the metres and style of kāvya date from the third or fourth century A.D. This fact must be taken into consideration in discussing the date of the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa.

Johnston in his comments on the language and style of Aśvaghoṣa has sought to establish that the rules of Pāṇini, which are generally adhered to, are not sufficient to account for certain peculiar grammatical forms. Aśvaghoṣa's acquaintance with a Dhātupāṭha is rendered possible by the *Buddhacarita*, XI, 70, illustrating nine senses of the root $\sqrt{av}$:

> *Athendravaddivyava śaśvadarkavad*
> *guṇairava śreya ihāva gāmava* |
> *avāyurāryairava satsutān ava śriyaśca*
> *rājannava dharmamāt-manaḥ* ||

But the *Saundarananda*, verse XII, 10, as piquantly observed by Johnston, 'refers to the threefold use of *asti* as a particle for the past, present and future,' the rule playing a part in the famous Buddhist controversy over the reality of the past and future, but not being found in Pāṇini or the orthodox grammars.[2]

> *triṣu kāleṣu sarveṣu nipāto 'stiriva smṛtaḥ*

In instances where, as Johnston observes, Pāṇini's rules are not complied with, the odd forms or constructions in Aśvaghoṣa's works have their parallels in the epics, while a few usages are peculiar to Buddhism. There are several examples in Pali, for instance, of the form of compound typified by Aśvaghoṣa's *udikṣyamāṇarūpa*, cf. Pali *taramānarūpa*.[3] The use of the phrase, *prāg eva* (Pali *pag eva*), as equivalent to *kim punar* is primarily Buddhist. The expression, *yenāśramas tena*, [4] conforms to the Pali idiom, *yena bhagavā tena*. The employment of the enclitics, *me* and *te* as instrumental is frequent in Pali works and Asoka's inscriptions; it is known as

[1] R. G. Bhandarkar, *JBBRAS*, 1901; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 151.
[2] *Acts of the Buddha*, Introd., p. lxviii.
[3] *Sutta-nipāta* (PTS), 417.
[4] *Buddhacarita*, VI, 65.

well to the epics but not generally sanctioned in classical Sanskrit. The method of comparison by relatives, e.g. *duḥkhaṃ eva viśiṣyate*, is not infrequently met with in the Mahāyāna Sūtras. The use of *asmi* for *aham* may be accounted for by *asmi* in the Pali word *asmimāna*, equivalent to *ahaṃkāra* and *ātmābhimāna*. We may not agree with Johnston in thinking that *pūrvatama* [1] is a mistake for *pūrvatana*, the archaic *purituma* being met with in the *Lalitavistara* gāthās. (Cf. Pali *Purimatara*, *Purimatame*) Like other Buddhist writers, Aśvaghoṣa is addicted to the case-ending *taḥ* in place of the ablative or instrumental, a frequent use of which is with a verb in the sense of knowing or understanding, e.g. *śubhato gacchasi*, [2] *draṣṭavyam bhūtataḥ*, [3] cf. Pali *bhūtaṃ bhūtato*, *abhūtaṃ abhūtato*. His fondness for the cognate accusatives is due to the earlier and epic usages. His kāvyas are rich in verbal forms in which the tenses are normally employed but no distinction is made between the perfect, imperfect and aorist. He often places, for the sake of emphasis, the conjunction *ca* and the interjection *hi* towards the end of a sentence. His works are 'pleasantly free from overgrown compounds' and the compounds used by him are 'never filled out with padding', though some of them are irregular.

In Aśvaghoṣa's vocabulary one may trace with Johnston the Ṛgvedic use of the word *dvija* for *agni*, [4] and verb *śrī* in the sense of 'emit (heat)', [5] and the epithet *Aurvaśeya* for Vaśiṣṭha. [6]

In connection with the ceremony of measuring out *soma* he makes use of the plain root $\sqrt{m\bar{a}}$ without compounding with the prefix *vi* or *ud*, [7] the instances of which occur in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. It is again the Brāhmaṇas that may sanction the use of the words *nivarta* [8] and *vimad* [9] in the sense of 'grow sober'. The reference to Prajāpati's act of creation by *tapas* [10] points to the same conclusion.

The employment of *prokṣaṇa* and *abhyukṣaṇ* which is indicative of his knowledge of the finer points of ritual goes to prove his indebtedness to the *Śrautasūtras*.

The two stanzas, cited below, betray undoubtedly their historical connection with the two ślokas in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*:

> saśiṣyaḥ kapilaśceha pratibuddha iti smṛtiḥ |
> saputraḥ pratibuddhaśca Prajāpatirihocyate ||
>
> *B.*, XII, 21.

> Yo yoniṃ yoniṃ adhitiṣṭhatyeko viśvāni rūpāni yoniś ca sarvāḥ |
> ṛṣiṃ kapilaṃ sastaṃ agre jñānair bibharti jñāyamānaṃ ca paśyet ||
>
> *Śvetāśvatara*, V, 2.

> Pravṛtti-duḥkhasya ca tasya loke tṛṣṇādayo doṣagaṇā nimittaṃ |
> naiveśvaro na prakṛtirna kālo nāpi svabhāvo na vidhir yadṛcchā ||
>
> *S.*, XVI, 17.

> Kālaḥ svabhāvo niyatir yadṛcchā bhūtāni yoniḥ puruṣa iti cintyaṃ |
> saṃyoga eṣāṃ natvātmabhāvāt ātmāpyaniśaḥ sukha-duḥkha-hetoḥ ||
>
> *Śvetāśvatara*, I, 2.

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1 *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 10.
2 *Saundarananda*, VIII, 48.
3 *Ibid.*, XIII, 44.
4 *Buddhacarita*, XI, 71.
5 *Saundarananda*, I, 2.
6 *Buddhacarita*, IX, 9.
7 *Saundarananda*, II, 36.
8 *Ibid.*, XV, 44.
9 *Ibid.*, IX, 30.
10 *Buddhacarita*, II, 51.

One may correctly observe with Johnston that though many of the legends alluded to are to be found in the *Mahābhārata*, they are not quite in the same form. Many of the stories referred to by Aśvaghoṣa are not to be found in the *Mahābhārata*. There must, therefore, have been some other literature dealing with these legends, possibly often in a kāvya form, which is now lost for ever.[1] The Jātaka representation of certain legends,[2] probably based on an earlier form of the Great Epic, goes to show that there grew up different legends, obviously in a ballad or kāvya form, about certain kings, nations, and personages, speaking of their destruction or degradation but accounting for it in different ways.[3]

Besides many Buddhist technical terms and words peculiar to Buddhism, Aśvaghoṣa freely employs several terms and expressions derived from the terminology of Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Rājadharma and other Indian sciences of which the source, among others, was the Śāntiparva of the *Mahābhārata*. Such proper names as Saṁkrandana, Lekharṣabha, Māyā and Ambara, and such ordinary words as *avi*,[4] *avasanga*, *arthavat*,[5] *upakara*, *dṛpti*, and *vallarī*,[6] all employed in special senses are only to be found in the lexica and not in any previous literature which is now known. The special kāvya vocabulary which grew richer and richer from the days of Kālidāsa is traceable in Aśvaghoṣa's poems only in their initial stages.[7]

Turning to Aśvaghoṣa's style, we cannot fail to appreciate the difficulty which he created for himself by trying to employ the literary art for purposes so incompatible as those of the story-teller, preacher, poet and scholar. Johnston characteristically observes: 'Aśvaghoṣa is a writer of baffling contrasts, on the one hand the literary artist as story-teller, preacher and poet, on the other the scholar anxious to conform with all the rules and to parade his knowledge. The possession of good qualities implies a liability to the corresponding defects, and among a people who treasured intelligence and learning it is not surprising to find some who lapsed at times, like the Buddhist poet, into pedantry. For if his matter is excellent, his manner is often disconcerting.'[8] A blend of such contradictions and opposites in Aśvaghoṣa marks out his singular greatness and genius.

The kāvya poetry as typified by the two works of Aśvaghoṣa follows a method of construction of the verses which is diametrically opposite to that in the Ākhyānas and Epics. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, for instance, almost the entire composition is in a kind of śloka metre having an even flow without any clear division. In it monotony is sought to be relieved by endless variations of rhythm, and the verses appear only as parts of a whole, and not as units by themselves, while frequent repetitions and recurrences of the stock phrases and the slow movement of the story are made to mitigate the monotony and tension of listening. In the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa, on the other hand, each verse is treated as 'a separate unit by itself both grammatically and in its sense and it is constituted of four clearly articulated *pādas*, in which cross reference and similarity of framework serve equally to bind the whole together and to delimit it from the contiguous verses'. Aśvaghoṣa occasionally demonstrates how a verse

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[1] Johnston, *Acts of the Buddha*, p. xlvii.

[2] See allusions in the *Sarabhanga J.* (522) and *Saṃkicca J.* (530).

[3] Barua, *The Arthaśāstra: A Blend of Old and New in the Bhārata-Kaumudī*, I, pp. 93ff.

[4] In the sense of 'mountain'.

[5] Meaning 'man'.

[6] Meaning 'feather'.

[7] Cf. such special words as *prasnigdha*, *pratiyātanā*, *karāla* and *nighna*, Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. lxxix.

[8] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxvii.

can be constructed on an epic basis. Or he takes a common phrase to build round it a complicated pun. The treatment of each verse as a separate unit *per se* might in a sense be regarded as a reversion to the practice of the *Ṛgveda*. It might historically be due to an older tradition of *kāvya* which developed in the country under the aegis of the ballads or on the lines of the reflective and didactic *gāthās*. Some earlier instances of this may perhaps be found in the *Psalms of the early Buddhist brothers and sisters*, or even in some of the Jātaka poems.

This kāvya method underwent further development in the classical stage. The principle that each verse is a separate unit asserted itself later. In Kālidāsa we notice an exception in so far as he 'occasionally constructs a verse on parallel or contrasted *pādas*', while ordinarily his rhythm is based on the verse as a whole and not on the individual *pādas*. Later poets enthusiastically followed his practice with the result that a kāvya epic came to be little more than a collection of miniature poems loosely strung on the thread of the story.

As a pioneer, Aśvaghoṣa, appears to have faced certain difficulties in building up a poem out of a number of stanzas sharply demarcated from their neighbours. Effective narration was indispensable as an art in his *kāvyas* and as the means of keeping the readers' minds directed to the real issue, especially when he had to convey in the form of poetry a definite message of the religion he ardently professed. The narration of the story was of secondary interest only to the classical writers who had no such mission through poetry beyond the appeal of their art. So the problem to him was—how to maintain the unity vital to his purpose. This he sought apparently to achieve by articulating his poems as clearly as his verse. The procedure adopted led him to (*a*) calculate with care the proportion of space to be allotted to each episode, and (*b*) to group together the verses by various devices into units, each dealing with a single topic. The expedients tried were either the simple way of doing this by change of metre, or employing *yamaka* to mark the end of a period, or constructing a whole series of verses on a similar scheme with a refrain or with a parallel set of similes.

The successful handling of comparisons is the main feature of Aśvaghoṣa's technique. For without comparisons (*upamās*) as the main ingredient of rhetoric it is not possible to communicate the emotional content of facts in long narrative poems such as the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda*. The reader's imagination is sought to be stimulated ordinarily by the employment of what the *Ālaṅkārikas* call *vakrokti* or indirect expression in which the incompleteness of the parallel is a powerful aid to suggestiveness. In Aśvaghoṣa's case, the *vakrokti* itself consists of comparison of some kind. He excels other Sanskrit poets in his fondness of similes drawn from a wide range of literature and natural phenomena.[1]

Gurner [2] has collected references from the *Saundarananda* and *Buddhacarita* to establish that the Sanskrit poetry of Aśvaghoṣa is characterized by the psychological interest evinced in many similes employed by him. It is not uncommon for a poet to draw a simile from natural objects for mental experience, from moving water to indecision, for instance. And the reverse process of using the mental experience as the source of the simile is not unknown even to the Sanskrit epic. The frequency, however, with

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[1] In this connection it is interesting to read Mrs. Rhys Davids' note on '*Similes from the Nikāyas*', published in *JPTS*, 1888.

[2] *The Psychological Simile in Aśvaghoṣa* by C. W. Gurner, *JASB*, N.S., Vol. XXVI, 1930, pp. 175–180; *S.*, IV, v. 42; *B.*, IX, v. 71; *S.*, VIII, v. 5; *S.*, X, v. 42; *S.*, XII, v. 33; *S.*, XIII, v. 5; *S.*, XIII, v. 6; *S.*, XV, v. 66; *S.*, XV, v. 67; *B.*, XIII, v. 61; *B.*, VIII, v. 76,

which it occurs in Aśvaghoṣa gives quite a special note to his kāvya and one may fairly suggest that it is largely through Aśvaghoṣa's influence that this type of simile found a place in later kāvya, including of course that of Kālidāsa.

Gurner draws our attention to a fully developed passage in the use of the psychological simile to describe external action.[1] Aśvaghoṣa has sacrificed his descriptive power to his psychological and didactic interest. This is clear from the account of Buddha's attack by Māra and his army. The simile from impotent passion is introduced primarily for its didactic value on a favourite Buddhist theme. A purely descriptive passage in the *Saundarananda* of animal life in the thickets of the Mountain-side has unexpectedly two illustrations (X, 11 and 14) of a more subtle and less didactic psychological significance. However subtle they may be, similes of this kind from psychology to an observation of nature are handicapped in point of literary satisfaction by their inverse character. The cardinal point in Aśvaghoṣa's psychology, especially in its ethical bearing, lies in that distinction between the self and senses, or between the mind and senses, which is the moral background of kāvya poetry.

It is far from being the case with Aśvaghoṣa that interest in human affection is absorbed entirely by the theme of passion, but the quieter emotional experiences of ordinary friendship present fewer opportunities for the psychological simile. Ingratitude has been mentioned as a simile for desertion of the home. The self-expression in Aśvaghoṣa's poetry gave the introspective thought a place in literary Sanskrit.

The similes of allegorical character are also in the writings of Aśvaghoṣa. The conception of the fire or sea of sorrow, so common in epic literature, has been given a distinctly ethical value by Aśvaghoṣa when he expounds Buddhist doctrine.[2] For the sea of sorrow compare *Rāmāyaṇa* (II, lix, 27–31) with *Buddhacarita* (I, 75). Other types of similes (e.g. purely picture similes) are also found in the writings of Aśvaghoṣa, e.g. the white-robed maiden asleep with her flute.[3] He is nevertheless indebted to the epics for his stock similes and *rūpakas* like the lotus and creeper, sun, moon and the stars, lightning and clouds, etc. The similes from the domain of consciousness and conduct, which Aśvaghoṣa uses so frequently, are also scattered in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[4] The obscure grammatical simile in *Saundarananda* (XII, 9, 10) is imitated by Kālidāsa.[5]

According to the Indian works on poetics, the similes or comparisons are either purely verbal without poetic emotion or substantial with poetic emotion. If merely verbal, their appeal lies to the intellect. Aśvaghoṣa's comparisons are not generally adapted to the emotional needs. His grammatical similes are laboured and pedantic. Some of them are far-fetched conceits. Those of the psychological type seem to have an academical aura about them.[6] Those drawn from ordinary life and are effectively employed for moral or didactic purposes are the similes to which normally a preacher has recourse. The *rūpaka type*, which is commonly met with in the epics but which became obsolete in later ages, is palpably artificial in spite of its majestic eloquence. The simplest comparisons, drawn from nature, are often the best; even where they are used pedantically, they are not lacking in the freshness of observation.

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[1] B., XIII, 46–51.
[2] Vide *Buddhacarita*, IX, 29.
[3] *Ibid.*, V, 49.
[4] Cf. *Rāmāyana*, V, xxviii, 12; V, xxix, 1; VI, lxiii, 3, 6.
[5] *Raghu.*, XV, 9; C. W. Gurner, *JPASB* (N.S.), Vol. XXIII (1927), pp. 347–67.
[6] *JASB*, 1930, pp. 175–180.

As for other rhetorical figures, Aśvaghoṣa makes much of distributive phrases where one has the zeugma of one verb with two nouns, or that of one verb with two pairs of nouns, or that of two verbs with one noun, or that of one adjective with two dependent nouns. The distributive compounds occur frequently, and rarely the numerical riddles and Kālidāsa's favourite figure, *arthāntaranyāsa*.

His love of recurring sounds is different in its character from that displayed by the later poets who employ *Yamaka* in all its varieties. Either he employs an ordinary form of *Yamaka* where there is the repetition of two syllables at the end of a *pāda*, or where it approaches rhyme, one has the repetition of the same syllables at the end of a *pāda*, either where a verse is repeated without alteration to enforce a comparison, or where, as in a number of cases, the same syllables are repeated in verse, usually with difference of meaning but not in emphatic positions. In repeating sounds, one of his favourite practices is to take the leading word in a sentence and form a vocative compound using this word as the base, e.g. *niḥsaṃśaya saṃśayo me* (*S.*, XVIII, 8). This turn of speech is reserved almost entirely for the Buddha. His leaning to repetitions of sounds led to experiments in rhyme with their several instances in the *Saundarananda*. This poem affords instances where there is a rhyme inside the *pāda*, those where the rhyme covers two *pādas*, and others where we have rhymes at the end of all the *pādas*. The stanza (*S.*, VIII, 32) in which four out of the six words end with *madā* and two with *pradāḥ*, the recurrent beat of rhyme is little in accord with the mood of epic poetry.

The classical poets of India differ from Aśvaghoṣa in their sensitiveness to variations of sound and delicate combinations which are a source of never-failing joy. In matching, however, the sense with the sound, some of them have followed a way that is decidedly lacking in subtlety, and sometimes manufactured verses with a limited number of consonants or even only one. The nearest approach to this ingenuous trick is to be found only in a solitary stanza in *Buddhacarita*, XII, 96—

*apārapārasaṃsārapāraṃ prepsurapārayat*

Aśvaghoṣa's hold on the intricacies of rhythm is amply attested by his success in the employment of *Upajāti* in long stretches without causing tedium to the reader. His verse is generally melodious, and occasional lines are particularly happy in the collocation of consonants. But he seldom hesitates to subordinate the agreeableness of sound to the display of learning. Sometimes he uses a word such as *ajihladat*, the ill sound of which is disapproved by Bhāmaha.

Aśvaghoṣa also uses words in more meanings than one sometimes in a recondite fashion to baffle the reader. In the ironical application of this method one has a clear anticipation of the way of Indian drama. I-tsing rightly observed that Aśvaghoṣa 'clothes manifold ideas in few words; for, besides this habitual use of words in two or more meanings, every single word almost in his poems is pregnant and should be given its full value in translation'.

In Cowell's estimate, Aśvaghoṣa by his technique was to Kālidāsa what Ennius was to Vergil. Johnston will rather seek Aśvaghoṣa's European analogy in Milton,[1] equally a scholar and equally fond of displaying his learning, who similarly sought to express his religion within the limits of an epic. His insistence on symmetry, his exposure of the framework and his non-functional decoration are characteristic of early work, not of a time

[1] *Buddhacarita*, II, Intro., xcv.

when art excels in the skill of concealing the art. In other words, he is primitive alike in his poetry, religion and philosophy. He reveals himself as a man of artistic temperament and strong passion who is capable of delighting in everything that appeals to the senses but finds no suitable foothold anywhere till he seeks refuge in Buddhism. All his writings are informed by the zeal of the converse. By his intense conviction of the importance of his message he carries away the reader of another faith and alien civilization. The inadequacy of his philosophy is no bar to the persuasiveness of his religious appeal. Admirable is his skill in narration, but the real appeal lies in the spontaneity of his overflowing emotion. There are two sources of this outflow of emotion: (1) his ardent devotion to the person of the Buddha, and (2) his keen sense of the impermanence of all things mundane and the ephemeral character of all ordinary joys of life. Every line of his two poems flows with the urge of his faith, and his religious zeal enlivens the driest passages. The second can account for the passion with which he denounces the ordinary joys of life. This is due not merely to a revulsion of feeling but also to a strong internal conviction of the truth of what he speaks. It is only when he begins to deal with that which lies at the core of his heart, forgetting his learning and his rhetorical and pedantic tricks.

The two sources of poetic emotion, viz. the profound veneration for the person of Buddha and the keen sense of the impermanence of all things and the utter worthlessness of all worldly goods, are in no way peculiar to Aśvaghoṣa. For the same are precisely the sources of the emotion which overflows in the psalms or inspired verses of the early Buddhist brothers and sisters. In Canto XVIII Aśvaghoṣa comes out just as a psalmist when he pays through the mouth of Nanda the following personal tribute to the Master:

Yā dṛṣtiśalyo hṛdayāvagāḍhaḥ
prabho bhṛśaṃ māmatudatsutīkṣṇaḥ |
tvadvākyasaṃdaṃśamukhena me
sa samudhṛtaḥ śalyahṛteva śalyaḥ || v. 7.

Kathaṃ kathābhāvagato'smi yena
chinnaḥ sa niḥsaṃśaya saṃśayo me |
tvacchāsanātsatpathamāgato'smi
sudeśikasyeva pathi pranaṣṭaḥ || v. 8.

Kṣayaṃ gataṃ janma nirastajanman-
saddharmacaryāmuṣito'smi samyak |
kṛtsnaṃ kṛtaṃ me kṛtakārya kāryaṃ
lokeṣu bhuto'smi na lokadharmā || v. 10.

Thera Vaṅgīsa, for instance, pays a similar tribute to the Buddha in the stanzas cited below:

Cando yathā vigatavalāhake nabhe
virocati vītamalo va bhānumā |
evaṃ pi Aṅgīrasa tvaṃ mahāmuni
atirocasi yasasā sabbalokaṃ ||
*Theragāthā* (PTS), v. 1252.

Ayam añjali pacchimo suppaṇāmito,
mā mohayi jānaṃ anomapañña |
parovaraṃ ariyadhammaṃ viditvā
mā mohayi jānaṃ anomaviriya ||

vārim yathā ghammanighammatatto
vācābhikaṅkhāmi sutaṃ pavassa |
yadatthiyaṃ brahmacariyaṃ acāri
Kappāyano kacci'ssa taṃ amoghaṃ ||
vv. 1272 and 1273.

The influence of an earlier version of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is to be sought, according to Johnston, in language, ideas, similes and other rhetorical figures. The *kāvyas* of Aśvaghoṣa and Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, 35. 7, refer in the same way to the story of the disturbance of Viśvāmitra's austerities by the *apsarā*, Ghṛtācī, while in the Bālakāṇḍa which is presumably added later to the epic narrates the story in some detail replacing Ghṛtācī by Menakā. The Chinese work called *Fo-pen-hsing-chi-ching* presupposes a text of the *Buddhacarita* in which Menakā, exactly as in the Bālakāṇḍa narration, takes the place of Ghṛtācī. An earlier Buddhist poet composed the story of Vessantara and Maddī in verse meaning to substitute it for the inspiring story of Rāma and Sītā, to offer in other words, the canonical *Vessantara Jātaka* as a substitute for the widely popular *Rāmāyaṇa*. As suggested elsewhere [1] the popularity of the most elegant form of the Anuṣṭubh or Śloka metre as developed in this epic led the earlier Buddhist poets to employ the same in such other later Pali canonical works as the *Buddhavaṃsa*, the *Cariyāpiṭaka* and the *Apadāna*.

Here a very important question arises—whether or not there was an earlier form of the *Buddhacarita* composed throughout, like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in the Anuṣṭubh metre before Aśvaghoṣa changed it into its present form, seeking to produce a kāvya chiefly in Upajāti? The cantos in Anuṣṭubh remain closer to the style of the epic and earlier traditional verses, while those in Upajāti and other metres take the kāvyas far away from it. Referring again to the allusion to the story of Viśvāmitra and Ghṛtācī, we cannot fail to find that the *Buddhacarita* verse reads almost like that in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, while the corresponding verse in the *Saundarananda* has altogether a different rune about it.

*Buddhacarita*, IV, 20:

Viśvāmitro maharṣiśca vigāḍho'pi mahattapāḥ |
daśavarṣāṇyaraṇyastho Ghṛtācyāpsarasā hṛtaḥ ||

*Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, xxxv, 7:

Ghṛtācyāṃ kila samsakto daśavarṣāṇi Lakṣmaṇa |
ato'manyata dharmātmā Viśvāmitro mahāmuni ||

*Saundarananda*, VII, 35:

Brahmarṣibhāvārthamapāsya rājyaṃ bheje vanaṃ yo viṣayeṣvanāsthaḥ |
sa Gādhijaścāpahṛto Ghṛtācyā samā daśaikaṃ divasaṃ viveda ||

A similar remodelling of the traditional verses in Anuṣṭubh is traceable in the *Jātakas*, e.g. the *Saṃkicca*, and the *Sarabhaṅga* as well as in the verses quoted in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (I, 6).[2]

Aśvaghoṣa was a master of simple pathos:

mahatyā tṛṣanayā duḥkhair garbheṇāsmi yayādhṛtaḥ |
tasyā niṣphalatnāyāḥ kvāhaṃ mātuḥ kva sā mama ||

[1] B. C. Law, *History of Pali Literature*, I, p. 290; Law, *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon (SBB)*, Pt. III, p. 91.

[2] Barua, *The Arthaśāstra: A Blend of Old and New in the Bhārata Kaumudī*, I, pp. 93ff.

Aśvaghoṣa's style became obsolete in the classic period of kāvya, especially after Kālidāsa. The change of taste and the preference of other methods of writing are accountable indeed for the waning of his influence on the poets who flourished after Kālidāsa.[1] The closest and most palpable is the historical relationship between Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa, although in all instances the evidence of direct borrowing is not conclusive. A few typical stanzas cited below from the writings of both may suffice to indicate the form in which Kālidāsa expressed the ideas for which he was indebted to his Buddhist predecessor.[2]

| Aśvaghosa | Kālidāsa |
| --- | --- |
| Taṃ gauravaṃ Buddhagataṃ cakarṣa<br>bhāryānurāgaḥ punarācakarṣa \|<br>So'niścayānnāpi yayau na tasthau<br>taraṃs taraṅgeṣviva rājahaṃsaḥ \|\|<br>(*S.*, IV, 42.) | Mārgācalavyatikarā kuliteva sindhuḥ \|<br>śailādhirājatanayā na yayau na tasthau \|\|<br>(*Kumāra S.*, V, 85.) |
| *Buddhacarita*—<br>Sa hi svagātraprabhayojjvalantyā<br>dīpaprabhāṃ bhāskaravanmumoṣa \|<br>mahārhajāmbūnada cāruvarno<br>vidyotayāmāsa diśaśca sarvāḥ \|\|<br>(Canto I, Śl. 32.) | Ariṣṭaśajyāṃ parito visāriṇā<br>sujanmana stasya nijena tejasā<br>niśithadīpāḥ sahasā hatatviṣo<br>babhūvurālekhya samarpitā iva.<br>(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto III, Śl. 15.) |
| Tasmāt pramāṇaṃ na vayo na kālaḥ<br>kaścit kvacit śraiṣṭhyamupaiti loke \|<br>rājñāmṛṣināñca hitāni tāni<br>kṛtāni putrairakṛtāni pūrvaiḥ \|\|<br>(Canto I, Śl. 51.) | Tejasāṃ hi na vayaḥ samīkṣate<br>(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto XI, Śl. 1.) |
| Mahātmani tvayyupapannametat<br>priyātithau tyāgini dharmakāme \|<br>sattvānvayajñānavayo'nurūpā<br>snigdhā yadevaṃ mayi te matiḥ syāt \|\|<br>(Canto I, Śl. 60.) | Sarvvaṃ sakhe tvayyupapanna-metat<br>(*Kumārasaṃbhava*, Canto III, Śl. 12.) |
| Śrutvā vacastacca manaśca yuktvā<br>jñātvā nimittaiśca tato'smyupetaḥ \|<br>didṛkṣayā Sākyakuladhvajasya<br>śakradhvajasyeva samucchritasya \|\|<br>(Canto I, Śl. 63.) | Kālidāsa has used the word 'Sakra-dhvaja' many times in his kāvya. |
| Vātā vavuḥ sparśasukhā manojñā<br>divyāni vāsāṃsyavapātayantaḥ \|<br>sūryaḥ sa evābhyadhikaṃ cakāśe<br>jajvāla saumyārciranīrito'gniḥ \|\|<br>(Canto I, Śl. 41.) | Diśaḥ prasedurmaruto vavuḥ sukhāḥ<br>pradakṣiṇārccirhavirāgnirādade<br>babhūva sarvvaṃ śubhaśaṃsi tatkṣaṇaṃ<br>bhavo hi lokābhyudayāya tādṛśaṃ<br>(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto III, Śl. 14.) |

[1] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. lxxix ff.
[2] *Saundarananda-kāvya*, Bengali Tr. by B. C. Law, Preface (*Anuvādaker kathā*).

Vātāyanebhyastu viniḥsṛtāni
parasparopāsita kuṇḍalāni |
strīṇāṃ virejurmukhapaṅkajāni
saktāni harmyeṣviva paṅkajāni ||
(Canto III, Śl. 19.)

teṣāṃ mukhairāsavagandha-
garbhaiḥ
vyāptantarā sāndrakutūhalānāṃ
vilolanetrabhramarairgavākṣaḥ
sahasrapatrābharaṇā ivāsan
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto VII, Śl. 11.)

Kācit tāmrādharoṣṭhena
mukhenāsavagandhinā
viniśaśvāsa karṇe'sya
rahasyaṃ śrūyatāmiti
(Canto IV, Śl. 31.)

Karṇe lolaḥ kathayitumabhūd-
ānana sparśalobhāt
(*Uttaramegha*, 40.)

Muhurmuhurmadavyāja-
śrastanīlāṃśukāparā |
ālakṣyarasanā reje
sphuradvidyudiva kṣapā ||
(Canto IV, Śl. 33.)

Amuṃ sahāsaprahitekṣaṇāni
vyājārddhasaṃdarśita mekhalāni
nālaṃ vikarttuṃ janitendra
śaṅkaṃ
surāṅganā vibhrama ceṣṭitāni
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto XIII, Śl. 42.)

Sa rājasūnurmṛgarājagāmī
mṛgājiraṃ tanmṛgavat praviṣṭaḥ |
lakṣmīviyukto'pi śarīralakṣmyā
cakṣūṃṣi sarvāśraminām jahāra ||
(Canto VII, Śl. 2.)

Sa nyaṣṭacihnāmapi rājalakṣmīṃ
tejoviśeṣānumitāṃ dadhānaḥ
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto II, Śl. 7.)

Hatatviṣo'nyāḥ śithilātma bāhavaḥ
striyo viṣādena vicetanā iva |
na cukruśurnāśru jahurna śaśvasu-
rna cetanā ullikhitā iva sthitāḥ ||
(Canto VIII, Śl. 25.)

Niśīthadīpāḥ sahasā hatatviṣo
babhūvurālekhya samarpitā iva
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto III, Śl. 15.)

Ādityapūrvaṃ vipulaṃ kulaṃ te
navaṃ vayo dīptamidaṃ vapuśca |
kasmādiyaṃ te matirakrameṇa
bhaikṣāka evābhiratā na rājye ||
(Canto X, Śl. 23.)

Ekātapatraṃ jagataḥ prabhutvaṃ
navaṃ vayaḥ kāntamidaṃ
vapuśca |
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto II, Śl. 47.)

Yo hyarthadharmau paripīḍya
kāmaḥ
syāddharmakāmye paribhūya
cārthaḥ |
kāmārthayoścāparameṇa dharma-
styājyaḥ sa kṛtsno yadi kāṅkṣi-
tārthaḥ ||
(Canto X, Śl. 29.)

Nadharmmamartha kāmābhyaṃ
vavādhe na ca tena tau
nārtham kāmena kāmaṃ vā
so'rthena sadṛśā striṣu
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto XVII, Śl. 57.)

Vacanena haranti valgunā
niśitena praharanti cetasā |
madhu tiṣṭhati vāci yoṣitāṃ
hṛdaye halāhalaṃ mahadviṣaṃ || [1]
(*Saundarananda kāvya*, 8. 35.)

madhu tiṣṭhati vāci yoṣitāṃ
hṛdi halāhalaṃ eva kevalaṃ
ata eva nipīyate 'dharo
hṛdayam muṣṭibhir eva tāḍyate
(v. No. 3380, *Subhāṣitāvalī*.)

[1] In Sarga VIII, verse 35, we find that the last two lines are known as part of a verse of Bhartṛhari (I, 82) which in the *Subhāṣitāvalī* (3380) is attributed to Kālidāsa

Pramadānāmagatirna vidyate
(8. 44.)

Manorathānāṃ agatir na vidyate
(*Kumārasaṃbhava*, Canto V, Śl. 64.)

. nanṛtustathānyāḥ stana-bhinnahārāḥ
(10. 37.)

Cacāla bālā stana-bhinna-valkalā
(*Kumārasaṃbhava*, Canto V, Sl. 84.)

babhūva sa hi saṃvegaḥ śreyasas-tasya vṛddhaye |
dhāturedhirivākhyāte paṭhito 'kṣara-cintakaiḥ ||
(12. 9.)

dhātoḥ sthāna ivādeśaṃ sugrīvaṃ samnyaveśayat
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto XII, Śl. 58.)

Śruta-mahatā śramaṇena
(9. 50.)

Sarasvatī śruta-mahatāṃ mahīya-tāṃ
(*Abhijñānaśakuntalaṃ*, VIII.)

vāteritaḥ pallavatāmrarāgaḥ
puṣpojjvalasrīriva karṇikāraḥ
(18. 5.)

Pracakrame pallavarāgatāmrā
prabhā pataṅgasya muneś ca dhenuḥ
(*Raghuvaṃśa*, Canto II, Śl. 15.)

Tataḥ smṛtimadhiṣṭhāya capalāni svabhāvataḥ |
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyo nivārayi-tumarhasi ||
(13. 30.)

Tasmād yasya mahābaho nigṛhī-tāni sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā
(*Bhagavadgītā*, 2. 68.)

Viṣayairindriyagrāmo na tṛptim-adhigacchati |
ajasraṃ pūryamāno'pi samudraḥ salilairiva ||
(13. 40.)

Rāgadveṣavimuktāis tu viṣayān indriyāiścaran
ātmavaśyair vidheyātmā prasādaṃ adhigacchati
(*Bhagavadgītā*, 2. 64.)

Besides the examples given above, some verses have been quoted by H. P. Shāstrī in the preface to his edition of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* published in 1910. They are as follows:—

Tāṃ sundarīṃ cenna labheta Nandaḥ
sā vā niṣeveta na taṃ natabhrūḥ |
dvandvaṃ dhruvaṃ tad vikalaṃ na śobhe-
tānyonyahīnāviva rātri candrau ||
*S.*, IV, 7.

parasparena spṛhaṇīya śobhaṃ
na cedidaṃ dvandvamayo jaiṣyat |
asmin dvaye rūpavidhānayatnaḥ
patyuḥ prajānāṃ vitatho'bhaviṣyat ||
*Kumāra S.*, VII, 66.

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and Māgha jointly. Peterson remarks that the verse recurs in the *Pañcatantra* (ed. Hertel, Harvard Oriental Series, I, 145) and also with the beginning *amṛtaṃ vadaneṣu yoṣitām* in the Kuvalayānanda. Aufrecht's indexes refer to *Subhāṣitamuktāvalī*, XVI, 2, where the reading is nearly as in the Kuvalayānanda. Bohtlingk cites (*Indische Sprüche*, 4677) *Subhāṣitārṇava*, 17A and a verse, *samukhena vadanti valgunā* (*Ind. Spr.* 7124 = *Pañcatantra*, ed. Kosegarten I, 202-3) in which the two lines are also contained. According to Dr. F. W. Thomas who in his note on the *Saundarananda-kāvya*, VIII, 35 (*JRAS*, 1911, pp. 1125-6) is of opinion that as the first half-verse is plainly original in the passage of the *Saundarananda*, we must substitute for Kālidāsa the name of Aśvaghoṣa and perhaps replace Māgha by somebody else (*kaścit*).

The following table will clearly indicate how Aśvaghoṣa repeated his ideas in his own works. It will also show his indebtedness to earlier Buddhist writings and ideas as well as his influence on other writers:—

*Saundarananda kāvya*—

| | |
|---|---|
| Kṛtāgaso'pi<br>(II, 24.) | Kṛtāgaso'pi<br>(Cf. *Buddhacarita*, II, 42.) |
| Parāśaraḥ śāpaśarastatharṣiḥ<br>kālīṃ siṣeve jhaṣagarbhayonim \|<br>Suto'sya yasyāṃ suṣuve mahātmā<br>Dvaipāyano vedavibhāgakartā \|\|<br>(VII, 29.) | Kālīṃ caiva purā kanyāṃ<br>jalaprabhavasaṃbhavāṃ \|<br>Jagāma yamunātīre<br>jātarāgaḥ parāśaraḥ \|\|<br>(*Buddhacarita*, IV, 76.) |
| Dvaipāyano dharmaparāyaṇaśca<br>reme samaṃ kāśiṣu veśyavadhvā \|<br>Yayā hato'bhūccalanūpureṇa pādena<br>vidyullatayeva meghaḥ \|\|<br>(VII, 30.) | Purā hi kāśisuṃdaryā veśavadhvā<br>mahānṛṣiḥ \|<br>Tāḍito'bhūt padanyāsāddurdharṣo<br>daivatairapi \|\|<br>(*Buddhacarita*, IV, 16.) |
| Hā Caitraratha hā vāpi hā<br>mandākinī hā priye \|<br>Ityārtā vilapanto'pi gāṃ<br>patanti divaukasaḥ \|\|<br>(XI, 50.) | Hā Mandākinī hā puṣkiriṇī hā vāpi<br>hā Caitraratha hā Pāruṣyaka<br>hā Nandanavana hā Misrakāvana<br>. . . . . . iti karuṇakaruṇaṃ<br>paridevase \|<br>(*Divyāvadāna*, p. 194.) |
| Tasmādyāsasamāsābhyāṃ tanme<br>vyākhyātumarhasi \|<br>Yacchrutvā śṛṇvatāṃ śreṣṭha<br>paramaṃ prāpnuyāṃ padaṃ \|\|<br>(XII, 17.) | Śruyatāmayamasmākaṃ siddhāṃ-<br>taḥ śṛṇvatāṃ vara \|<br>Yathā bhavati saṃsāro yathā<br>vai parivartate \|\|<br>(*Buddhacarita*, XII, 16.) |
| Antarbhūmigataṃ hyambhaḥ<br>śraddadhāti naro yadā \|<br>Arthitve sati yatnena tadā<br>khanati gāmimāṃ \|\|<br>(XII, 33.) | Kāṣṭhaṃ hi mathnan labhate<br>hutāśaṃ<br>bhūmiṃ khanan vindati cāpi<br>toyaṃ \|<br>Nirbandhinaḥ kiñcana nāstya-<br>sādhyaṃ<br>nyāyena yuktaṃ ca kṛtaṃ ca<br>sarvaṃ \|\|<br>(*Buddhacarita*, XIII, 60.) |
| Karmaṇo hi yathādṛṣṭātkāyavāk-<br>prabhavādapi \|<br>Ājīvaḥ pṛthagevokto duḥśodhat-<br>vādayaṃ mayā \|\|<br>(XIII, 17.) | Ājīvo nāma bhijjamāno kāyavacī-<br>dvāresu yeva bhijjati, manodvāre<br>ājīvabhedo nāma natthi, pūraya-<br>māno pi tasmiṃ yeva dvāradvaye<br>pūrati, manodvāre ājīvapūranaṃ<br>nāma natthi. Kāyadvāre pana vi-<br>tikkamo ājīvahetuko pi atthi, na<br>ājīvahetuko pi tathā vacīdvāre . . .<br>Yaṃ pi pana ājīvahetukaṃ catu-<br>bbidhaṃ vacīduccaritaṃ bhāsanti<br>idaṃ akusalaṃ vacīkammaṃ nāma,<br>tato virati pi sammāvācā nāma. |

Yaṃ pana ājīvahetu nesādamacchabandhādayo pāṇaṃ hananti adinnaṃ ādiyanti micchācaranti ayaṃ micchā-ājīvo nāma, tato virati sammā-ājīvo nāma. Yaṃ pi lañcaṃ gahetvā musā bhaṇanti pesuññapharusasamphappalāpe pavattenti ayam pi micchā-ājīvo nāma, tato virati sammā-ājīvo nāma.
(*Atthasālinī*, p. 220; cf. *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, p. 64.)

Nāpaneyaṃ tataḥ kiñcitprakṣepyaṃ nāpi kiñcana |
draṣṭavyaṃ bhūtato bhūtaṃ yādṛśaṃ ca yathā ca yat ||
(XIII, 44.)

' Kiṃ pan'ettha paṭhama-pārājike kiñci apanetabbaṃ vā pakkhipitabbaṃ vā āsi n'asīti? Buddhassa Bhagavato bhāsite apanetabbaṃ nāma n'atthi. Na hi Tathāgatā ekavyañjanaṃ pi niratthakaṃ vadanti. Sāvakānaṃ pana devatānaṃ vā bhāsite apanetabbaṃ pi hoti. Taṃ dhammasaṃgāhakā therā apanayiṃsu. Pakkhipitabbaṃ pana sabbatthāpi atthi, tasmā yaṃ yattha pakkhipituṃ yuttaṃ taṃ pi pakkhipiṃsu yeva. Kiṃ pana tan ti? 'Tena samayenāti' vā, 'Tena kho pana samayenāti' vā.
(*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, P.T.S., p. 12.)

*Buddhacarita*, Canto XI—

Yatnena labdhāḥ parirakṣitāśca ye vipralabhya pratiyāṃti bhūyaḥ |
teṣvātmavān yācitakopameṣu kāmeṣu vidvāniha ko rameta || 22
Anviṣya cādāya ca yātatarṣā yānatyajaṃtaḥ pariyāṃti duḥkhaṃ |
loke tṛṇolkāsadṛśeṣu teṣu kāmeṣu kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 23
Anātmavaṃto hṛdi yairvidaṣṭā vināśamarchaṃti na yāṃti śarma |
kruddhograsarpapratimeṣu teṣu kāmeṣu kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 24
Asthi kṣudhārtā iva sārameyā bhuktāpi
Yānnaiva bhavaṃti tṛptāḥ
jīrṇāsthikaṅkālasameṣu teṣu kāmeṣu kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 25
Ye rājacaurodakapāvakebhyaḥ sādhāraṇatvājjanayaṃti duḥkhaṃ |
teṣu prabiddhāmiṣasaṃnibheṣu kāmeṣu kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 26

*Therīgāthā*—

Asisūlūpamā kāmā kāmā sappasiropamā |
ukkopamā anudahanti aṭṭhikaṅkālasannibhā || 488
aniccā addhuvā kāmā bahudukkhā mahāvisā |
ayoguḷo va santatto aghamūlā dukkhapphalā || 489
rukkhapphalūpamā kāmā maṃsapesūpamā dukhā |
supinopamā vañcaniyā kāmā yācitakūpamā || 490
sattisūlūpamā kāmā rogo gaṇḍo aghaṃ nighaṃ |
aṅgārakāsusadisā aghamūlaṃ bhayaṃ vadho || 491

evaṃ bahudukkhā kāmā akkhātā antarāyikā |
gacchatha na me bhavagate vissāso atthi attano || 492
(*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, III, page 97.)

Yatra sthitānāmabhito vipattiḥ
śatroḥ sakāśādapi bādhavebhyaḥ |
himareṣu tesvāyatanopameṣu kāmeṣu
kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 27
Girau vane cāpsu ca sāgare ca
yadbhūṃśamarchaṃtyabhilaṅghamānāḥ |
teṣu drumaprāgraphalopameṣu
kāmeṣu kasyātmavato ratiḥ
syāt || 28
Yānarcayitvāpi na yāṃti śarma
vivardhayitvā paripālayitvā |
aṅgārakarṣapratimeṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 29
Tīrthaiḥ prayatnairvividhairavāptāḥ
kṣaṇena ye nāśamiha prayāṃti |
svapnopabhogapratimeṣu teṣu
kāmeṣu kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 30
Vināśamīyuḥ kuravo yadarthaṃ
Vṛṣṇāyaṃdhakā maithila daṇḍakāśca |
śūlāsikāṣṭhapratimeṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 31
Suṃdopasuṃdāvasurau yadarthamanyonyavairaprasūtau vinaṣṭau |
sauhārdaviśleṣakareṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 32
Kāmāṃdhasaṃjñāḥ kṛpayā va ke ca
kravyāstu nātmānamihotsṛjaṃti |
sapatnabhūtesvaśiveṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 33
Kāmāṃdhasaṃjñaḥ kṛpaṇaṃ karoti
prāpnoti duḥkhaṃ vadhabandhanādi |
Kāmārthamāśākṛpaṇastapasvī
mṛtyuśramaṃ cārhati jīvaloke || 34

Appassādā āvuso kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Aṭṭhisankhalūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Maṃsapesūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Tiṇukkūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Aṅgārakāsūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Supinakūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Yācitakūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Rukkhaphalūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Asisūnūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Sattisūlūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahupāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo. Sappasirūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhīyo.
(Cf. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, 130, 364.)

*Saundarananda-kavya*—

Bhārasyodvahanārthaṃ ca
rathākṣo'bhyajyate yathā |
Bhojanaṃ prāṇayātrārthaṃ
tadvadvidvānniṣevate ||
(XIV, 12.)

. . . yathā vā pana akkhaṃ abbañjeyya yāvad evā bhārassa nittharaṇatthāya, yathā vā pana puttamaṃsa-āhāraṃ āhāreyya yāvad eva kantārassa nittharaṇatthāya; evaṃ eva bhikkhu patisaṃkhā yoniso āhāraṃ āhāreti n'eva davāya . . .
(*Mahāniddesa*, p. 241.)

Praklehyamadbhiravadanaṃ
vilokyāḥ sarvato diśaḥ |
Cāryā dṛṣṭiśca tārāsu
jijāgariṣuṇā sadā ||
(XIV, 24.)

Addasā kho Bhagavā dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena āyasmantaṃ Mahāmoggallānaṃ Magadhesu Kallavāḷamuttagāme pacalāyamānaṃ nisinnaṃ, disvā, . . . āyasmato

Mahāmoggallānassa pamukhe pāturahosi . . . Nisajja kho Bhagavā āyasmantaṃ Mahāmoggallānaṃ etad avoca, 'pacalāyasi no tvaṃ Moggallāna, pacalāyasi no tvaṃ Moggallānā' ti?
(*Aṅguttara*, IV, 85.)

Dante'pi dantaṃ praṇidhāya kāmaṃ tālvagramutpīḍya ca jihnuyāpi |
Cittena cittaṃ parigṛhya cāpi kāryaḥ prayatno na tu ne'nuvṛttāḥ ||
(XVI, 83.)

. . . tena bhikkhave bhikkhunā dantehi dantamādhāya jivhāya tāluṃ āhacca cetasā cittaṃ abhiniggaṇhitabbaṃ abhinippīḷetabbaṃ abhisantāpetabbaṃ; tassa dantehi dantamādhāya jivhāya tāluṃ āhacca cetasā cittaṃ abhiniggaṇhato abhinippīḷayato abhisantāpayato ye pāpakā akusalā vitakkā chandūpasaṃhitā pi dosūpasaṃhitā pi mohūpasaṃhitā pi te pahīyanti te abbhatthaṃ gacchanti.
(*Majjhima Nikāya*, I, pp. 120-121.)

Atha dvijo vāla ivāptavedaḥ kṣipraṃ vaṇik prāpta ivāptalābhaḥ |
jitvā ca rājanya ivārisainyaṃ Nandaḥ kṛtārtho gurumabhyagacchat ||
(XVIII, 1.)

Atha Candraprabhā devakanyā baṇig iva labdhalābhaḥ samyaksampanna iva karshakaḥ śura iva vijitasaṃgrāmaḥ sarvarogaparimukta ivāturo yayā vibhūtyā Bhagavatsakāśaṃ āgatā . . . .
(*Divyāvadāna*, p. 555.)

Aśvaghoṣa has also repeated the same Brahmanical allusion in his two kāvyas:

*Saundarananda*—

Bheje śvapākīṃ munirakṣamālāṃ kāmādvaśiṣṭhaśca sa sadvariṣṭhaḥ |
Yaṣyāṃ Vivasvāniva bhūjalādaḥ sutaḥ prabhūto'sya Kapiñjalādaḥ ||
(Canto VII, 28.)

*Buddhacarita*—

Mātaṅgyāmakṣamālāyāṃ garhitāyāṃ riramsayā |
Kapiñjalādaṃ tanayaṃ Vaśiṣṭho'janayan muniḥ ||
(Canto IV, 77.)

If we read carefully the *Buddhacarita* (Canto XI, vv. 38 and 39) and the *Ratnāvalī* of Nāgārjuna (vv. 46-47 and 49) we may find that Aśvaghoṣa exercises some influence on Nāgārjuna, the author of the *Ratnāvalī*. The *Buddhacarita* has the following passage: '*Nidrāvidhātāya tathaiva śayyā yānaṃ tathādhvaśramanāśanāya* [1] which may be compared with the passage '*Sayyā'nnapānahastyaśvaśtṛṇāṃ*' in the *Ratnāvalī* (v. 49). Again Nāgārjuna has borrowed the idea in verses 46-47, of the *Ratnāvalī* from Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*. Cf. '*Duḥkhapratīkāranimittabhūtāstasmātprajānāṃ viṣayā na bhogyāḥ*' ('Therefore the objects of sense are the means for remedying people's suffering and not enjoyment'—*Buddhacarita*, Canto XI, v. 39) with '*Duḥkhapratikriyāmātraṃ Śarīraṃ Vedanāsukhaṃ*' . . . (v. 46) and '*Duḥkhapratikriyāmātraṃ Kalpanāmātraṃ eva ca*' . . . (v. 47).[2]

[1] A bed is for riddance of drowsiness and a carriage is for avoidance of road-fatigue.
[2] *JRAS*, 1936, p. 249.

## Chapter IV

# AŚVAGHOṢA THE TEACHER

In the colophon of the three works that are attributed definitely to Aśvaghoṣa, he is eulogized, as we have seen, as 'the great eloquent poet, the mendicant and teacher'. In the preceding chapter we have discussed at length his position as a great pioneer in the writing of Sanskrit *kāvya* and drama. Here it remains to carefully consider his position as a senior Buddhist mendicant and gifted exponent of Buddhism. Although Aśvaghoṣa the mendicant is not separable from Aśvaghoṣa the teacher, the difference between the two lies in the fact that his career as a mendicant is primarily a personal concern, while his success as a teacher has a public interest, for on that depends the inherent strength of the popular appeal of the religion of which he was an ardent devotee and exponent. His life as a mendicant implies only a change of faith, while his rôle as a teacher means an active advocacy of a new faith with the zeal of a convert. Thus his second capacity is the happy culmination of the first. Whatever might have been the Master's apprehension as to the future of the Good Faith due to the sentimental appeal of poetry in general, going by the definition of poetry he adopted, he felt justified to think that Aśvaghoṣa the poet was not incompatible with Aśvaghoṣa the mendicant and teacher. Poetry with its religious appeal developed in Buddhism in spite of the Master's timely warning against its prevalence.

How exactly was his change of faith brought about, particularly through whose instrumentality, we cannot say. The tradition gives the Sthavira Pārśva or a pupil of his the credit for Aśvaghoṣa's conversion to the new faith. If it be assumed that Aśvaghoṣa's life is a progressive one with its three successive stages, all comprehended by the continuous evolution of a single personality—Aśvaghoṣa the man—it cannot fail to be both interesting and instructive to enquire how Aśvaghoṣa being a Brāhmaṇa became a zealous Buddhist to assume at last the responsible rôle of a teacher.

As a mendicant Aśvaghoṣa belonged to a particular Buddhist sect and school of thought. Broadly speaking, he adhered to a school of thought within the definition of the Hīnayāna or Lesser Vehicle which aims at the attainment of Arhatship as the final goal of religious effort, and not that of Buddhahood as in the Mahāyāna or Greater Vehicle. As for the sect, it is still an unknown factor. Johnston is inclined to connect him with the Kaukūlikas or their offshoot—the Bahuśrutikas. Even if he were an adherent of the Bahuśrutikas, we have sought to show that it does not mean that the sect to which he belonged was of the Mahāsaṅghika line. The Bahuśrutikas themselves, at least according to the *Mahāvyutputti*, sprang from the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda sect which stood very close to the Theravāda or Pali Buddhism. Whatever the actual name of the sect, its main line is Sarvāstivāda. Amongst the earlier eighteen sects, [1] the Suttavāda or Sautrāntika was the third offshoot of the Sarvāstivāda. The main legends of the Buddha which Aśvaghoṣa availed himself of in his kāvyas were, as we shall see presently, those traceable in the traditions of the

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[1] Geiger, *Mahāvaṃsa*, Ch. 5; B. C. Law, *Debates Commentary* (P.T.S.Tr. Series—English rendering of the *Kathāvatthupakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*), Intro., pp. 1-7.

Theravāda, the Sarvāstivāda and the Mahāsaṅghika. As regards the history of the First Council, Aśvaghoṣa has followed a distinct tradition, the tradition undoubtedly of his sect. This differs from others in so far as it makes the Indraśāla Cave connected with the Gṛdhrakūṭa mountain as the venue of the Council instead of the Saptaparṇī Cave associated in other traditions with the Vebhāra or Vaihāra hill of Rājagṛha. The point of difference which is historically important is that it speaks only of the rehearsal of the Sūtras by Ānanda and the redaction made of the *Sūtra Piṭaka*, having nothing to say about the recital of the Vinaya by Upāli and the redaction made of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. [1] The omission is significant. The Prātimokṣa expounded in the *Buddhacarita* is not the Prātimokṣa code of the *Vinaya*; it is the collective name for the guiding moral principles such as those embodied in the *Dhammapada* and other Sutta texts,—the principles which were behind or the ideals which were before the Vinaya discipline. [2] In other words, the Prātimokṣa in the *Buddhacarita* was in both matter and form the Prātimokṣa principles that are said to have been inculcated by the Buddha in the *Mahāpadāna Suttanta*. [3] The *Mahāvastu* presenting a legendary life of the Buddha is introduced as the *ādi* or beginning of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of the Lokottara branch of the Mahāsaṅghikas. [4] Here by the word *ādi* is really meant the *nidāna* or historical introduction to the Lokottaravāda Vinaya. There is a similar historical introduction to the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of the Theravāda as well as the Sarvāstivāda. This does not mean, therefore, that the Lokottaravāda sect dispensed with the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.

According to Vasumitra, the Sarvāstivāda interpretation of Buddhism centred round the four Noble Truths. [5] The same holds true alike of Theravāda. [6] The four Truths equally form the main burden of Aśvaghoṣa's interpretation of Buddhism. Disease, decay, and death are the unavoidable accidents of individual life which has its beginning in birth. These contingencies are made the main and only argument by prince Siddhārtha in favour of the life of renunciation which he was led to adopt. Aśvaghoṣa is not tired of repeating it and constantly dinning it into our ears. The finding of the sure way of escape from the above contingencies is said to have been the only aim of the ascetic life of Siddhārtha. There were otherwise no other causes of unhappiness from a worldly man's point of view which impelled him to leave the world. The Discourses of the Buddha on which Aśvaghoṣa's knowledge of Buddhism was based are full of such painful reflections. So far as the phenomenal side of individual life is concerned, the contingencies mentioned above formed the main crux in all forms of asceticism. There was no new reading of them as facts in Buddhism. Aśvaghoṣa's dilatation on the subject cannot but remind us of the reflections in the Maitrāyaṇa Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad, [7] the two Sanskrit epics, the Jātakas, and other Buddhist Canonical texts. The points were equally stressed in Sāṃkhya as known to and represented by Aśvaghoṣa, particularly in his *Buddhacarita*. [8] The case made out for Buddhism is

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[1] Beal, *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*, Ch. 28, p. 335.

[2] *Ibid.*, Ch. 25, p. 296ff.

[3] *Dīgha*, II, p. 49: *Pātimokkhaṃ uddisati.*

[4] Senart, *Mahāvastu*, I, p. 2—*āryamahāsāṃghikānāṃ lokottaravādināṃ madhyadeśikānāṃ pāṭhena Vinayapiṭakasya mahāvastuye ādi.*

[5] *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Calcutta University, Vol. I—Masuda's Article.

[6] *Peṭakopadesa*, Chap. I—*na kiñci buddhānaṃ bhagavantānaṃ dhammadesanāya Dhammacakkato bahiddhā; tassa sabbaṃ suttaṃ ariyadhammesu pariyesitabbaṃ.*

[7] I, 4.

[8] Book XII, vv. 14 foll.

that none among the Indian teachers before the Buddha could find and point out the sure way of escape from the ills attendant on existence. Thus it is the certitude of the way of escape or deliverance that distinguished his new faith from Arāḍa's Sāṃkhya-Yoga method and Rudrarāma's Yogic method. The weak point in all the contemporary and previous systems lay in the inadequacy and dubiousness of the paths prescribed. The Buddha's way of escape suggested, however, a far superior way of truth as well as a far better way of life. The historical or the philosophico-ethical position of Buddhism thus made out by Aśvaghoṣa was fundamentally the same as that represented in the body of the *Sūtra Piṭaka* which served as the only Buddhist scriptural authority for him.

The ills of life needed a satisfactory explanation and the ethical principles required a sound philosophic foundation. The needed explanation did not lie in the theory of creation by God, or by nature, or by fate, or by caprice. In the soul theory was not to be found the sound philosophic foundation of rational ethics. The satisfactory explanation lay in the Buddha's *pratītya-samutpāda* or law of causation [1] and in it alone could be laid a sound philosophic foundation of ethics and morality. Here, too, Aśvaghoṣa's presentation of Buddhism is in complete agreement with the trend of the Buddha's teachings in the *Sūtra Piṭaka.* The same observation applies equally to his interpretation of *nirodha* meaning the complete cessation of the ills attendant on life [2] and the Noble Eightfold Path pointing to the sure way leading thereto. [3] His description of *nirvāṇa* of which the essence is tranquillity (*śānti*) is similarly based upon the Sūtra texts. The wiles and guiles by which women entice men, captivate their hearts and keep them enchained in the prison of lust, are precisely those which are described in the Jātakas and other Sūtra works. His ideal king, ideal city, ideal state, ideal government, ideal home, father, mother, brother, wife, son and other relations, ideal religious order, ideal men and ideal religious life are at once epic, traditional, and Buddhistic. Similarly his description of the three Refuges, the *Tathāgata* as the most perfect type of man and human and divine character, the *Dharma* as the best of norms ever propounded by any person in history, the personnel of the ideal *Saṅgha* as stalwarts among the disciples and followers of a great teacher and the persons endowed with wisdom, vision, character and spirituality is all in keeping with the Sūtra tradition. *Śraddhā* (faith), *vīrya* (energy) and other moral faculties, the immoral mental states with their unwholesome effects and creating fetters and hindrances are all interpreted by him in consistency with the Sūtra line of development of these psyco-ethical concepts. This very remark holds equally valid in the case of Māra [4] as depicted by him. His Brahmanical learning and heritage, his wide knowledge of the epics and popular legends, his own keen observation of human affairs and natural conditions enabled him to bring out the importance, unfold the significance, and present the beauty, attractiveness and poetic appeal of the religious themes that lay nearest to his heart. But even here, in all these matters, he followed the time-honoured Sūtra tradition of Buddha's teachings.

[1] Cf. B. C. Law, *Formulation of Pratīyasamutpāda, JRAS,* April, 1937; E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought,* Chap. V; B. M. Barua, *Pratītyasamutpāda as basic concept of Buddhist Thought, B. C. Law Volume,* Pt. I, pp. 574ff.

[2] Cf. E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought,* p. 43; B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism,* pp. 28-29.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

[4] For a clear conception of Māra based on Hīnayāna literature, see B. C. Law, *Buddhistic Studies,* pp. 257ff.

The literary art employed by Aśvaghoṣa in his *Saundarananda-kāvya* in presenting the subject of salvation through the poetical discourses is evidently the same as followed in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The same is the case with the Kārikā form of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. One may maintain alike that this very art has been extensively used in the *Milinda-Pañho*. This art was being developed in India through such Upaniṣads as the Kaṭha and such Pali Dialogues as the Sāmaññaphala and Sakkapañha Suttas. The distinctive trait of the art as employed in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Saundarananda-kāvya* is that here the dialogues are represented as those which took place between the *guru* (teacher) and the *śiṣya* (disciple).[1] The art consists in creating a historico-psychological or dramatic situation in order to excite curiosity in the reader's mind to watch with rapt attention the course of events, the trend of the serious conversation, and to keep up the reader's or hearer's interest until the happy end of the drama is seen or known. Here the *śiṣya* is just another word for the *bhakta*, devotee or votary.[2]

In the *Gurugītā*, the Guru is defined as the Master who opens the eye of the disciple blinded by the darkness of ignorance with the probe and soothing balm of knowledge and by whom the way of salvation is pointed out.

This very definition of the Guru looms large in the following stanza addressed by the Buddha to Nanda:[3]

> Unmīlitasyāpi janasya madhye
> nimīlitasyāpi tathaiva cakṣuḥ |
> prajñāmayaṃ yasya hi nāsti cakṣuś-
> cakṣur na tasyāsti sacakṣuṣo'pi ||

'Similarly a man's eyes may be closed and yet he alone has sight among people, though their eyes are open; for though a man has eyes, yet he has not sight, unless he has the eye of intuitive wisdom.'

*S.*, XVIII, 39–41.

> staveṣu nindāsu ca nirvyapekṣaḥ
> kṛtāñjalirvākyamuvāca Nandaḥ ||
> Aho viśeṣeṇa viśeṣadarśistvayānukampā
> mayi darśiteyaṃ |
> yat kāmapaṅke Bhagavannimagnas-
> trāto 'smi saṃsārabhayādakāmaḥ ||
> Bhrātrā tvayā śreyasi daiśikena
> pitrā phalasthena tathaiva mātrā |
> hato' bhaviṣyaṃ yadi na vyamokṣaṃ
> sārthāt paribhraṣṭa ivākṛtārthaḥ ||

*Bh.*, XI, 14.

> Tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hṛṣṭaromā Dhanañjayaḥ |
> praṇamya śirasā devaṃ kṛtāñjalirabhāṣata ||

*Ib.*, XI, 44.

> Tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṃ
> prasādaye tvāmahamīśamīḍyaṃ |
> piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ
> priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhuṃ ||

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[1] *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 20, 22.
[2] *Ibid.*, XVIII, 53.
[3] *Ibid.*, XVIII, 36.

*S.*, XVIII, 22.

Uttiṣṭha dharme sthita śiṣyajuṣṭe
kiṃ pādayorme patito'si mūrdhnā |
abhyarcanaṃ me na tathā praṇāmo
dharme yathaiṣā pratipattireva ||

*Ib.*, XVIII, 1.

jitvā ca rājanya ivārisainyaṃ
Nandaḥ kṛtārtho gurumabhyagacchat ||

*Bh.*, XI, 33.

Tasmātvamuttiṣṭha, yaśo labhasva,
jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṃ samṛddhaṃ |

For such expressions as *karmayoga* (*S.*, XVII, 19), *abhyāsayoga* (*S.*, XVI, 20) and *indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyo* (*S.*, XIII, 30) Aśvaghoṣa was certainly indebted to the *Bhagavadgītā*. The following account given by Aśvaghoṣa of the practice of *dhyāna* or *yoga* in the *Saundrananda-kāvya* is nothing but a replica of Vāsudeva's account of the *abhyāsayoga* in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

*S.*, XIV, 1-9.

Atha smṛti-kavāṭena pidhāyendriyasaṃvaraṃ |
bhojane bhava mātrājño dhyānāyānāmayāya ca ||
Prāṇāpānau nigṛhṇāti glāninidre prayacchati |
kṛto hyatyarthamāhāro vihanti ca parākramaṃ ||
Yathā cātyarthamāhāraḥ kṛto'narthāya kalpate |
upayuktastathātyalpo na sāmarthyāya kalpate ||
Ācayaṃ dyutimutsāhaṃ prayogaṃ balameva ca |
bhojanaṃ kṛtamatyalpaṃ śarīrasyāpakarṣati ||
Yathā bhāreṇa namate laghunonnamate tulā |
samā tiṣṭhati yuktena bhojyeneyaṃ tathā tanuḥ ||
Tasmādabhyavahartavyaṃ svaśaktimanupaśyatā |
nātimātraṃ na cātyalpaṃ meyaṃ mānavaśādapi ||
Atyākrānto hi kāyāgnir guruṇānnena śāmyati |
avacchanna ivālpo'gniḥ sahasā mahatendhasā ||
Atyantamapi samhāro nāhārasya praśasyate |
anāhāro hi nirvāti nirindhana ivānalaḥ ||
Yasmānnāsti vināhārāt sarvaprāṇabhṛtāṃ sthitiḥ |
tasmāddusyati nāhāro vikalpo'tra tu vāryate ||

*Bh.*, VI, 16-17.

Nātyaśnatas tu yogo'sti na caikāntamanaśnataḥ |
na cātisvapnaśīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna ||
Yuktāhāravihārasya yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu |
yuktasvapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkhahā ||

Such instances of indebtedness of Aśvaghoṣa to the *Bhagavadgītā* and similar other works do not, however, mean that he has presented through his kāvyas any other doctrine or method of salvation than what he found or believed to be consistent with Buddhism. The *upaniṣad* (doctrine and method) elucidated and advocated by him is the *upaniṣad* of the Buddha: [1]

Mokṣasyopaniṣatsaumya vairāgyamiti gṛhyatāṃ |
vairāgyasyāpi saṃvedaḥ, saṃvido jñānadarśanaṃ ||
Jñānasyopaniṣaccaiva samādhirūpadhāryatāṃ |
samādherapyupaniṣatsukhaṃ śarīramānasaṃ ||

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[1] Barua, *Ceylon Lectures*, pp. 241ff.

Praśrabdhiḥ kāyamanasaḥ sukhasyopaniṣatparā |
praśrabdherapyupaniṣatprītirapyavagamyatām ||
Tathā prīterupaniṣatprāmodyaṃ paramaṃ mataṃ |
prāmodyasyāpyahṛllekhaḥ kukṛteṣvakṛteṣu vā ||
Ahṛllekhasya manasaḥ śīlaṃ tūpaniṣacchuci |
ataḥ śīlaṃ nayatyagryaṃ iti śīlaṃ viśodhaya ||
*S.*, XIII, 22–26. [1]

The popular and institutional religions, based more or less on devotion (*bhakti*), needed the conception of a Deity or perfect type of personality,—the Divine being in a human form (*Puruṣottama*). This very idea in the name of *Agrapudgala* was shaping itself through the *Nikāyas* and the *Jātakas*, and naturally the Buddha was held out as the Agrapudgala or Puruṣottama. [2] Whilst the *Great Epic* held out Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as the Puruṣottama and the *Rāmāyaṇa* Rāma Dāśarathī, Aśvaghoṣa made use of his two kāvyas to establish that Buddha Gautama was the needed Puruṣottama for the salvation of suffering humanity. The Guruvāda, too, was the basic idea of Hīnayāna standing as it did for the ideal of discipleship, and not for that of perfect Buddhahood. Johnston rightly observes [3] that Aśvaghoṣa 'divides (*S.*, V, 16ff.) religious aspirants into two classes, those who obtain salvation of themselves by virtue of the *hetu* working within them, and those who can only act in reliance on others (*parapratyaya*); the Buddha is an instance of the former category (*B.*, II, 56), Nanda of the latter'. [4]

The *Buddhacarita* is accordingly devoted to the life of the Buddha, the Puruṣottama and Guru, and the *Saundarananda* to that of Nanda, the disciple and Arahat, and, one may reasonably suggest, of Aśvaghoṣa himself in the rôle of Nanda.

If, as emphatically maintained by Waterhouse, the function of religion consists not only in creating the ideals of life but in generating and glorifying faith in their reality as well, the same is equally the function of the religious poetry as developed by Aśvaghoṣa in his two kāvyas and by Vyāsa and Vālmīki in the two Sanskrit epics. The country, the kingdom, the people, the city, and the rest associated with the life and acts of the best of men assume an ideal character, and we are to see how far our poet succeeded in creating such ideals and by what means at his disposal. As for the means it is easy to anticipate that these were three in all: (1) the progressive ideas in the collective Indo-Aryan tradition, (2) the changes brought about in them by the teaching of the Buddha, and (3) the personal conviction and power of description of the poet himself.

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[1] Cf. *Vinaya*, V, p. 164:
*Vinayo saṃvaratthāya, saṃvaro avippaṭisāratthāya, avippaṭisāro pāmujjatthāya, pāmujjaṃ pītatthāya, pīti passaddhatthāya, passaddhi sukhatthāya, . . . . . . yathābhūtaṃñānadassanam nibbidatthāya, nibbidā virāgatthāya, virāgo vimuttatthāya, vimutti vimuttiñāṇadassanatthāya, vimutti-ñāṇadassanaṃ anupādāparinibbānatthāya.*

[2] *Saddhammopāyana*, 92, 558; *Aṅguttara*, V, 16, 325ff.; *Suttanipāta*, 544, *Dhammapada*, 78; *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, II, 188.

[3] *The Buddhacarita*, introd., p. xxxiv.

[4] *Saundarananda*, V, 16–18.
Saṃkleśapakṣo dvividhaśca dṛṣṭastathā
dvikalpo vyavadānapakṣaḥ |
ātmāśrayo hetubalādhikasya bāhyāśrayaḥ
pratyayagauravasya ||
Ayatnato hetubalādhikastu nirmucyate
ghaṭṭitamātra eva |
yatnena tu pratyayaneyabuddhirvimokṣamāpnoti parāśrayeṇa ||
Nandaḥ sa ca pratyayaneyacetā yaṃ śiśriye tanmayatāmavāpa |

To the Buddhists in general, the best of the four continents was Jambudvīpa, the best for the reason that all the Buddhas are born here, and not in any other continent. [1] The Buddhist emperor Asoka claimed that he succeeded in creating a sphere of his moral influence in the whole of Jambudvīpa. [2] Similarly the *Great Epic* and the *Purāṇas* seek to establish the imperium, political and cultural, over all the countries in the known portion of the earth. [3] Aśvaghoṣa accepts and states the Buddhist tradition regarding the continent of Jambudvīpa without comment. [4]

The general Buddhist tradition narrows down the continent by singling out the Middle Country (*Madhyadeśa*) as the central region in Northern India which is destined to be hallowed by the birth of the Buddhas.[5] With Baudhāyana and Vaśiṣṭha among the Smriti-writers the Indo-Aryan customs and usages of the Aryandom alias Middle Country were the standard of approved conduct, whereas with Manu the ideal land was the Brahmarṣideśa included in the Buddhist Midland. The Middle Country corresponding to Baudhāyana's Aryandom has received only incidentally the following word of praise from Aśvaghoṣa's powerful pen:

Tayoḥ satputrayormadhye Śākyarājo rarāja saḥ |
Madhyadeśa iva vyakto Himavat-Pāripātrayoḥ ||

*S.*, II. 62.

'The king of the Śākyas shone between those two good sons of his (Śuddhodana's) like the Middle Country displayed between the Himalayas and the Pāripātra.'

So far as the advent of Buddha Gautama is concerned, the ideal kingdom for the Buddhists is the Śākya territory with Kapilavastu as its ideal city or capital, precisely as in the description of Vālmīki the ideal kingdom was Kośala with Ayodhyā as its ideal chief city. In both the kingdoms the ruling family was represented by the descendants of king Ikṣvāku of the Solar race of warriors: [6]

Ikṣvākuvaṃśyāste bhuvi Śākyā iti smṛtāḥ

*S.*, I. 24.

Although Aśvaghoṣa relies on the current Buddhist tradition about the origin of the Śākyas and the foundation of a new territory and its capital Kapilavastu, he is careful not to offend the refined taste of the Indo-Aryan society of his time by avoiding the reference to the brother and sister marriage which is naively mentioned in the earlier Buddhist tradition in the Nikāyas. [7]

Sundarī, the wife of Nanda, too, is not purposely described as his uterine sister. [8] Vālmīki, who was the ideal poet with Aśvaghoṣa among his predecessors, skilfully avoided the popular tradition of Rāma's marriage with his sister Sītā as recorded in the *Dasaratha Jātaka* [9] by giving Sītā

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[1] *Jātaka*, I, p. 49—Tato dīpaṃ vilokento saparivāre cattāro dīpe oloketvā, tīsu dīpesu Buddhā na nibbatanti, Jambudīpe yeva nibbatantīti dīpaṃ passi. Cf. *Lalitavistara* (Lefmann), p. 19.

[2] Barua, *Asoka and his Inscriptions*, I, pp. 106ff.

[3] B. C. Law, *India as described in early texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, pp. 8 foll.

[4] Beal, *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*, XX, 1674-75, p. 241.

[5] *Jātaka*, I, 49; *Lalitavistara*, (Lefmann), p. 19.

[6] *Dīgha*, I, p. 87; cf. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, I, 239.

[7] *Dīgha*, I, pp. 87 foll.—Ambaṭṭha Sutta; cf. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, I, pp. 258–260; Paramatthajotikā on the *Khuddakapāṭha* (PTS), pp. 158–160.

[8] *Therīgāthā* (PTS), 155-156; *Therīgāthā Commentary*, pp. 80ff.; *Manorathapūraṇī*, pp. 217-218.

[9] *Jāt.* (Fausböll), IV, pp. 123 foll.

a mysterious origin in sītā or the furrow of a land and representing her as a foster-child of king Janaka of Videha.

Kapilavastu became the native land (jātibhūmi) as much to the Śākyas as the ruling race as to the Śākyas as Buddhists. [1] Aśvaghoṣa made it to appear as the ideal Indian city vying in its glory with Vālmīki's Ayodhyā. In some respects it is expressly made to compare with Girivraja, the hill-girt city of Magadha. The implied comparison of the city is really with the Alakā of Kubera and the heavenly city of the Thousand-eyed Indra. One great advantage of its position was that it was located in a valley of the Himalayas. [2] It derived its religious sanctity and historical importance from the fact that, like Kākandī, Mākandī and Kauśāmbī, [3] it was built on the holy site of the hermitage of a renowned sage like Kapila. Here Aśvaghoṣa faithfully followed and took full advantage of the Buddhist tradition, which adds also the name of Śrāvastī to the list of such cities. [4]

For the description of the ideal city of Kapilavastu we need not make Aśvaghoṣa particularly indebted to Vālmīki's account of Ayodhyā. It is in substance as well as in detail the traditional description of an Indian city which was to be depicted as well laid, populous and prosperous. But nearer Aśvaghoṣa's time we find the magniloquent prose description in the *Milinda* of the Yona city of Sāgala (Śākala), and the more so, of the purely ideal city of Dhammanagara.[5]

To increase the importance of Kapilavastu, the poet was bound to raise also the importance of Kapila the sage and his hermitage. The elaborate description of Kapila and his hermitage is not to be found in the Pali *Sutta Piṭaka*. The same remark holds true of his description of the internal life of the hermitage of Bhārgava. Even for such descriptions of the best of hermitages Aśvaghoṣa need not wholly be suspected of conscious or unconscious borrowings from the Araṇyakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, it being easy to find a prototype of these in the legend of Sāriputta in the Pali book of *Apadāna*.[6]

One thing is certain, namely, that in Aśvaghoṣa's description, whether of Kapila's hermitage or of Kapilavastu the city, there is a greater Brahmanical colouring and much less of making it a substitute for the Buddhistic ideal; there is hardly any jarring note or tendency to fault-finding. For example, in connection with the Śākya princes who founded the city of Kapilavastu, Aśvaghoṣa says:

> Samājairutsavairdāyaiḥ kriyāvidhibhireva ca |
> alaṃ cakruralaṃ vīryāste jagaddhāma tatpuraṃ ||
>
> (*S.*, I, 55.)

'Those heroes adorned that city, the wonder of the world,[7] with assemblies, feasts, gifts and religious ceremonies.'

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[1] *Majjhima*, I, 145; *Aṅg.*, III, 366.

[2] *S.*, I, 5: *pārśve Himavataḥ*; I, 43: *kukṣiṃ Himagireḥ*.

[3] *S.*, I, 57-58:

> *Kapilasya ca tasyarśestasminnāśramavāstuni |*
> *Yasmātte tatpuraṃ cakruḥ, tasmāt kapilavāstu tat ||*
> *Kakandasya Makandasya, Kuśāmbasyeva cāśrame |*
> *puryo yathā hi śrūyante tathaiva Kapilasya tat ||*

[4] *Paramatthajotikā*, I, p. 110; cf. II, Pt. I, p. 300: Sāvatthīti Savatthassa isino nivāsanaṭṭhānabhūtā nagarī yathā Kākandī Mākandīti. B. C. Law, *Srāvastī in Indian Literature*, p. 6; D. P. Guha (*IC*, X, 167) is not justified in constructing the Pali statement as meaning that Kākandī is another name of Mākandī.

[5] *Milinda-Pañho* (Trenckner's Ed.), pp. 1 foll. and 332.

[6] *Apadāna* (P.T.S.), Pt. I, pp. 15ff.

[7] The word *jagaddhāma* is not so much 'the wonder of the world' as 'the epitome of the world'. Cf. *gāme sampiṇḍite viya* in Buddhadatta's account of Kāveripaṭṭana. Buddhadatta's *Manuals*, Pt. I, Introduction, p. xv.

By his learning and wisdom, knowledge of the Vedas and various sciences, association with the aged and experienced persons, royal descent and noble heritage, many bright personal qualities and rare virtues, heroism and other warrior-like gifts, moral fortitude and benevolence, wise rule and able administration, sovereignty and foresight, devotion to religious duties and love of his subjects, Śuddhodana is made to figure as the ideal king of Aśvaghoṣa. He is apt to appear at first sight as the Buddhist compeer of Vālmīki's Daśaratha without the latter's drawbacks. The Hindu poet's *Rāma-rājya* without its blemishes may be seen in the happy state of things which is said to have prevailed in the Śākya territory since the birth of Siddhārtha or Sarvārthasiddha.[1] The ideal king of Aśvaghoṣa is substantially the ideal king pictured in the Rājadharma section of the Śāntiparva of the *Great Epic*, and no less in the Kauṭilīya *Arthaśāstra*. Śuddhodana is a typical Hindu king who viewed his subjects like his own sons:

svābhyaḥ prajābhyo hi yathā
tathaiva sarvaprajābhyaḥ śivamāśaśaṃse || (*B.*, II, 35.)

He is not a Buddhist king in so far as his heavenly prototype is Śakra, the Thousand-eyed king of the gods, and Śakra's wife, Śacī, is the heavenly prototype of his queen Māyā.[2] The conjugal life of a prince and his wife is pictured in the light of the conjugal life of Śakra and Śacī:

sārdhaṃ tayā Śākyanarendravadhvā
Śacyā sahasrākṣa ivābhireme | (*B.*, II, 27.)

He is not a Buddhist king in so far as 'he drank *soma* according to the ritual and continually repeated the Vedas and observed the law laid down in them,' [3] 'benignly at the due time with the due ceremony he caused his priests to measure out the *soma*', [4] or 'caused the sacrificial ground to be laid out and by his protection he enabled the Brāhmaṇas to meditate without impediment on the Absolute'. [5] In other respects he is the ideal pre-Buddhistic Indo-Aryan king as depicted in several *Jātakas*. The Cakravartī ideal of righteous rule as propounded by the Buddha does not figure very prominently, [6] although it seems very likely that the *rājadharmas* (royal duties) which he mentions are the ten essential duties of a righteous ruler (*dasa rājadhammā*) according to the Buddha. [7] The moral qualities of *dhṛti* (endurance) and *satya-pratijñā* (adherence at all costs to the word given) are taken by all schools of political thought to be the outstanding qualities of a good king. But Aśvaghoṣa's statement, *dhṛtyāvākṣīt pratijñāṃ sa* [8] cannot but remind us of Aśoka's utterance: *dhiti paṭiṃñā ca mamā ajalā* (*acalā*). [9] The conduct of king as a *ṛṣi* or seer (*rājarṣi vṛtta*) praised by the Buddhist poet [10] was equally a common Indo-Aryan ideal. The

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[1] *B.*, II, 1–19; S., III, 28ff.
[2] *Buddhacarita*, Johnston's tr., I, 2; *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king* (Beal's tr.), I, 4.
[3] *S.*, II, 44: *Tenāpāyi yathākalpaṃ somaśca yaśa eva ca |*
*Vedāścāmnāpi satataṃ Vedokto dharma eva ca ||*
[4] *Ibid.*, 36: *Gurubhirvidhivat kāle saumyah somamamīmapat |*
[5] *Ibid.*, 35: *Aśrāntaḥ samaye yajvā yajñabhūmimamīmapat |*
*pālanācca dvijān Brahma nirudvignānamīmapat ||*
[6] *Ibid.*, 32: *Cakravartīva ca parāndharmāyābhyudasīsahat ||*
Cf. *Cakkavattī-sīhanāda-Sutta, Lakkhaṇa Sutta in Dīgha*, III.
[7] *Ibid.*, 31: *rājadharmasthitatvāt.*
[8] *Ibid.*, 13.
[9] *SRE*, II.
[10] *S.*, II, 29.

pride of belonging to a family of royal seers (*rājarṣi-kula*) is prominent in the following description of Śuddhodana:

Kulaṃ rājarṣivṛttena yaśogandhamavīvapat ||[1]

In the Kauṭilīya *Arthaśāstra* (I, 9), the person fit for appointment as councillor or officer (*amātyas*) is expected to be endowed with the qualities of friendliness and firm devotion (*maitro dṛḍhabhaktiḥ*). This is echoed in the following qualities with which Aśvaghoṣa endows his ideal king: *sauhārda-dṛḍhabhaktitvān maitreṣu*,[2] 'friendship and firm devotion to allies'.[3] As a parallel to Aśvaghoṣa's description according to which the ideal king is to carry on the administration of the kingdom as a solemn pledge (*lit.*, dedication) *rājyaṃ dīkṣām iva vahan*, one may aptly cite from the Kauṭilya-vacana the dictum: *dīkṣā tasyābhiṣecanaṃ*,[4] 'the solemn pledge (self-dedication) is his consecration'.

If the ideal king is expected to think of the welfare of his subjects just as a loving father does of his sons, the ideal queen matching with him must be one who behaves like a loving mother to them. The ideal queen to the Buddhist poet is Māyā just as Kauśalyā is to Vālmīki. So we read:

Prajāsu māteva hitapravṛttā [5]

In the Sutasoma Jātaka, the ideal king is expected to figure like a compassionate father or mother to his subjects, desirous of their welfare:

Yathā pitā athavāpi mātā
anukampakā atthakāmā pajānaṃ.[6]

Both Daśaratha and Śuddhodana were scions of the Ikṣvāku family of warriors. Both were kings, one of Ayodhyā, the other of Kapilavastu. One had three queens and four sons, while the other had two queens and two sons. The sons of the former were to their loving father like four arms of Viṣṇu, the four-armed god, while the two sons of the latter stood on two sides of their father like the Himalaya, the highest mountain, and the Pāripātra, the southern range of hills. Daśaratha and Śuddhodana were both loving and dutiful fathers, and both felt deeply grieved when their sons walked out of the royal cities and kingdoms, one being banished for a period of fourteen years and joyfully accepting the punishment as if it were a self-inflicted one in order to enable his father to redeem his promise, the other renouncing the world for good in order to find out the way of escape from the grip of birth, decay, disease and death and to set an example to others. Rāma had to suffer for his father's sins whereas in the case of Siddhārtha the renunciation was the self-chosen course of life and the attainment to which it led, was just in fulfilment of the prediction made by the Buddhas of the past. Although both Kaikeyī and Mahāprajāpati Gautamī were step-mothers, one to Rāma and the other to Sarvārthasiddha, the latter had no crooked maid like Mantharā to poison her mind; she was throughout the same loving aunt and foster-mother, and in the end a gifted female disciple. The Buddhist counterpart of Vālmīki's Lakṣmaṇa is Nanda, both of whom are emotional creatures with firm personal devotion

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[1] *Ibid.*, 29. Cf. Hāthigumphā Inscription in which Khāravela is eulogistically introduced as *rājisi-Vaṃsa-kula-vinisito*—Barua, Old Brāhmī Inscriptions in the Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri Caves, p. 29.

[2] *Saundarananda*, II, 18.

[3] Johnston translates it by 'out of firm devotion to amity with those who were his allies'.

[4] *Arthaśāstra*, I, 19.

[5] *Buddhacarita* (Cowell's Ed.), I, 16.

[6] *Jātaka*, V, p. 504. Cf. Aśoka's *SRE*, II.

to the elder brother who to each of them was the *guru*. Both Lakṣmaṇa and Nanda were separated from their wives. In Lakṣmaṇa we find a younger brother noted for the spirit of self-abnegation, while Nanda represents a most handsome man of passionate nature, full of human weakness. Ūrmilā, the wife of the former, passes as a guileless woman who ungrudgingly bore the pain of separation from her husband, whereas Sundarī, the wife of the latter and the most handsome woman was the beauty of the age with a passionate longing for the company of her husband. Nanda followed his elder brother and *guru* inwardly oppressed by the torments of sexual passion. But Lakṣmana followed Rāma to fall at last a victim at the hands of Kāla (Death), while Nanda followed the Buddha, his elder brother and *guru*, only to escape from the bondage of sin and the clutches of decay and death. Although one may feel that some earlier form of the love-story of Vidyā-Sundara was in the historical background of the love-story of Sundara-Nanda, the redeeming features of the latter are that there is nothing to offend the moral taste and that its culmination is not the physical union of the two lovers. Yaśodharā, the beloved and devoted wife of Siddhārtha, stands pre-eminently as the Buddhist match for Jānakī, the wife of Rāma; even she is more than a match. Sītā, whose Buddhist counterpart is really Mādrī, the wife of Viśvantara (Pāli Vessantara), the Bodhisattva, followed her husband and lord like a shadow. She was the cause of the destruction of Bālī and Rāvana and the ruin of Laṅkā and Ayodhyā and she was banished at last and engulfed by the Mother Earth. Yaśodharā, the wife of Siddhārtha, joined the religious order founded by her husband and lord only to find herself at the head of the Buddhist sisters.

Let us pursue further the lines of comparison and contrast as between the life of the Buddha on the one hand and the life of Rāma as depicted in Vālmīki's epic and that of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as depicted in Dvaipāyana's *Great Epic* and *Harivaṃśa* on the other, for without it we shall miss the whole trend of Aśvaghoṣa's poetic delineation of things, events, characters, attainments, thoughts, ideas, principles, acts and teachings with their practical effects on humanity and the course of civilization. We need not bring in for comparison the life of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, for the simple reason that it forms no part of the picture held before us by the Buddhist poet.

The life of the Buddha prior and posterior to the attainment of Buddhahood forms two distinct episodes precisely like the life of Rāma before and after his consecration. The life of the Buddha prior to Buddhahood is the career of Sarvārthasiddha as a highly gifted Śākya prince and heir-apparent to the throne occupied by his worthy father Śuddhodana; his life after Buddhahood is the career of the Tathāgata as the saviour of gods and men, while the intermediate period of six years is occupied by the career of Siddhārtha the ascetic who went out of the world in quest of the truth and also by his activities as a great hero whose exploits were crowned with victory at the most difficult battle with Māra. This victory led to the attainment of Buddhahood which in its turn was followed by the foundation of the kingdom of righteousness. In the case of Rāma, his life before the *abhiṣeka* is his career as a nobly gifted Ikṣvāku prince, his life after the *abhiṣeka* is his career as an ideal Hindu king while the intermediate period of fourteen years is covered by his career as a prince in exile wandering from hermitage to hermitage, from forest to forest, with his wife Sītā and step-brother Lakṣmaṇa and as a great hero whose exploits were crowned with victory at the arduous battle with Rāvaṇa. This victory led to the attainment of the coveted position as a Divinity or God incarnate which

in its turn was followed by his installation as the full-fledged ruler of Ayodhyā.

As regards Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, although a similar historical outline may be made out of the legendary account in the *Great Epic* and its supplement, his life has no appeal to Aśvaghoṣa except as God incarnate in the rôle of the *Guru* and teacher in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The Buddhist ethical ideal was deadly against recognizing him even as a *Bodhisattva* or previous personal form of the Buddha. [1] But the case was otherwise with Rāma. So far as the creation of ideal human characters is concerned, Aśvaghoṣa emulated his poetic fame with Vālmīki whom alone he freely acknowledged, as we saw, as *ādikavi*.

If Rāmarājya of Ayodhyā was the ideal state in the delineation of Vālmīki, the Śākyarājya was equally so in the account given of it by Aśvaghoṣa. But the picture of the Śākyarājya as an ideal state is held twice before us by the far-famed Buddhist poet, once immediately after the birth of Siddhārtha the prince [2] and subsequently after the first visit paid to Kapilavastu by Siddhārtha the Tathāgata. [3] In the first instance, the picture is one of a kingdom, aglow with all the signs of security, prosperity, contentment, lawful conduct, happiness and piety, in short, all that makes for a popular heaven on earth (*pratyakṣataḥ svargamivopalabhya*), [4] while in the second instance, it is the changed picture of the life of the people prepared to risk everything for the sake of salvation or leading a more determined and conscious life of moral rectitude and religious fervour from the inner conviction about the truth and the path. The difference between the two lies in that between the kingdom of piety, which can, according to the Buddha, be founded by a virtuous and gifted king overlord (*cakravartin*), and the kingdom of righteousness which is brought into existence by an enlightened teacher of gods and men—a supreme Buddha. [5]

The study of Buddhism has now reached a stage when we are called upon to distinguish between Buddhism from the Buddha's standpoint and that from the standpoint of his disciples and lay-worshippers. If the search for truth and the sure way of salvation be, as suggested, the distinctive feature of the first, the *śaraṇāgati* is undoubtedly the distinctive feature of the second. The whole career of Siddhārtha the ascetic, as depicted by Aśvaghoṣa and others, makes indeed an inspiring and instructive history of the search for truth and its epoch-making result, namely, the attainment of Buddhahood, while the subsequent career of the Buddha Tathāgata is occupied by the vigorous and effective teaching of the Noble Eightfold Path. The latter gave rise to a new *śaraṇāgati* by ardently following which one might be sure of escaping from the rounds of birth and death with the attendant ills and realizing *Nirvāṇa*.

According to the *Bhagavadgītā* (VII, 16) the *śaraṇāgati* is resorted to by the four kinds of persons: one afflicted with a malady, one seeking after truth, one desirous of worldly advantage, and one guided by knowledge and wisdom:

*Caturvidhā bhajante māṃ janāḥ sukṛtino'rjuna* |
*ārtto jijñāsurarthārthī jñānī ca Bharatarṣabha* ||

The fourth man is ranked the best for the reason that he is led through many births by the noblest of desires and purposes and fully endowed with faith and other moral qualities and faculties, and thus endowed he rightly directs his mind to reach the godhead the essence of whose being is the

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[1] Cf. *Ghata Jātaka*, No. 355.
[2] *Buddhacarita*, II, 1–19.
[3] *Saundarananda*, III, 25–42.
[4] *Buddhacarita*, II, 12.
[5] *Dīgha*, III, pp. 73 foll. and 76.

supreme state of tranquillity (*parā śānti*). One realizes *Brahma-nirvāṇa* by obtaining this state.

But as defined in the Theravāda or Hīnayāna form of Buddhism of which Aśvaghoṣa is a powerful exponent, the very word *śaraṇa* implies that a person searching for it is inwardly driven by the fear of an impending danger as well as that the refuge sought for is one which is the most secure and safest, hence the very best that is available:

Bahuṃ ve saraṇaṃ yanti pabbatāni vanāni ca |
ārāma-rukkha-cetyāni manussā bhayatajjitā ||
N'etaṃ kho saraṇaṃ khemaṃ, n'etaṃ saraṇaṃ uttamaṃ |
n'etaṃ saraṇaṃ āgamma sabbadukkhā pamuccati ||
Yo ca Buddhañ ca Dhammañ ca Saṅghañ ca saraṇaṃgato |
cattāri Ariya-saccāni sammapaññāya passati ||
Dukkhaṃ dukkhasamuppādaṃ dukkhassa ca atikkamaṃ |
ariyañ c'aṭṭhaṅgikaṃ maggaṃ dukkhūpasamagāminaṃ ||
Etaṃ kho saraṇaṃ khemaṃ, etaṃ saraṇaṃ uttamaṃ |
etaṃ saraṇaṃ āgamma sabbadukkhā pamuccati || [1]

'Frightened by fear they betake themselves to many a refuge, to sacred hills, woodlands, pleasances and tree-shrines. But this is the safe refuge, the refuge which is the best, none betaking oneself to such a refuge escapes entirely from all suffering. He who (however) is gone to the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order as his refuge (and) perceives through the right understanding (the nature of) the Four Noble Truths—the Ill, its rise, its overcoming, and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the relief from the ill,—this is verily the safe refuge, the refuge which is the best: having come to this refuge, one escapes entirely from all suffering.'

Thus in the Buddhist idea of *śaraṇāgati* the seeker of the refuge is primarily the *ārtta* or 'one who is upset' and in the course of seeking he becomes the inquirer, eager to know the things as they are, desirous of attaining to the best goods that are attainable, and becomes the wise, replete with knowledge, emancipated and living with the satisfaction that all that had to be done has been done. The two typical historical examples of such a *śaraṇāgati* chosen by Aśvaghoṣa for delineation are those of Nanda, the half brother of Siddhārtha, and Śāriputra, who figured as the chief disciple of the Buddha.

If the *śaraṇāgati* and *śaraṇa* be relative ideas, one implying the other, the best kind of *śaraṇāgati* must have for its refuge the best of the *śaraṇas*. The *Bhagavadgītā* represents Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as the best and only *śaraṇa* for all the four classes of devotees, for He is the alpha and the omega of everything, the omniform, omnipresent and omnipotent personal God,—the Supreme Being. All kinds of offering, all modes of worship are ultimately meant for Him alone, and all are exhorted to leave everything else for His sake. The Sātvata or Bhāgavatic *śaraṇāgati* signifies the devotion to Him alone, only His worship with a single heart and accepting Him as the ultimate goal:

*Manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru* |
*māmevaiṣyasi yuktaivamātmānaṃ matparāyaṇaḥ* || [2]

In the Pali commentaries, the *śaraṇāgati* is psychologically defined as 'the birth of a religious impulse, whether due to reliance on others or not, in the form of the tendency to accept that as the ultimate, with the consciousness of the sins being utterly destroyed through one's serene faith

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[1] *Dhammapada* (PTS), vv. 188–192.
[2] *Bhagavadgītā*, IX, 34.

in that, having that for the *guru*, which impels a person to believe, thinking, "this is my refuge", "this is my ideal".'[1]

We have already discussed the difference and distinction between *parapratyaya* and *aparapratyaya* in *śaraṇāgati* as interpreted by Aśvaghoṣa.[2]

The three Refuges usually offered for *śaraṇāgati* in Hīnayāna to the afflicted world are, as we saw, the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order. In the Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta, the Buddha suggests *karma* as the refuge of men (*kamma-paṭisaraṇā*) [3] and in another context, exhorts his disciples to make themselves their own refuge, not others,—to be atta-saraṇā, anaññasaraṇā. [4] The Dhamma embodying all the tenets of the Master was to take the place of the Master in his absence. After the death of the Buddha one of his disciples delcared '*Mayaṃ dhammapaṭisaraṇā*' (the doctrine is indeed our refuge now).[5] So there is no wonder that Aśvaghoṣa should speak of the sīla (moral behaviour according to the prescribed rules of conduct) as being the *śaraṇa* or *āśraya* for a religious aspirant:

*Sīlaṃ hi śaraṇaṃ saumya kāntāra iva daiśikaḥ* [6]

As Buddhaghosa points out, the ultimate refuge for all beings is *nirvāṇa*.[7] In commenting on the predicate, *sabbatopabham* [8] as applied to *nirvāṇa*, Buddhaghosa takes it also to mean that whatever the nature of the effort or the mode of approach, all are directed to the attainment of *nirvāṇa* which is the ultimate goal.[9] This significant explanation of the predicate goes at once to make nirvāṇa the impersonal counterpart of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, the godhead of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Although the Brahma-*nirvāṇa* attainable within the bosom of such a godhead and the Buddhistic *nirvāṇa* not attainable in the heart of such a Supreme Being are almost characterized alike, Aśvaghoṣa's depiction of *nirvāṇa* is faithful to the delineation which was shaping itself through the texts of the *Sūtra Piṭaka*. The extinguishing of a burning lamp when its oil is exhausted is the familiar simile suggested by Pāṇini [10] and met with alike in the Sūtra texts [11] and the *Bhagavadgītā*.[12] But behind the following description of nirvāṇa by the Buddhist poet was certainly a Buddhist text such as one contained in the *Aggi-vacchagotta Sutta*:

Dīpo yathā nirvṛtimabhyupeto naivāvaniṃ gacchati nāntarikṣaṃ |
diśaṃ na kāṃcidvidiśaṃ na kāṃcit snehakṣayāt kevalameti śāntiṃ || [13]

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[1] *Paramatthajotikā* on the *Khuddakapāṭha* (*PTS*), p. 16: *Tappasādataggarukatāhi vihataviddhaṃsitakileso tapparāyanatākārappavatto parapaccayo vā aparapaccayo vā cittuppādo saraṇagamanaṃ . . . . . . (yena) cittuppādena 'esa me saranaṃ' 'esa me parāyanan'ti.* B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, Chapter I; cf. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, I, p. 231.

[2] *Saundarananda*, V, 16–18, XVII, 15.

[3] *Jāt.*, VI, p. 102; *Majjhima*, III, p. 203.

[4] *Dīgha*, III, pp. 58, 77; cf. *Bhagavadgītā*, VI, 5—*uddharedātmanātmānaṃ*.

[5] *Majjhima*, III, p. 9.

[6] *Saundarananda*, XIII, 28; cf. XVI, 30.

[7] *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, I, p. 231.

[8] *Majjhima*, I, p. 329: *Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ.*

[9] *Papañca-sūdanī*, II, p. 413. *Pabhan ti titthassa nāmaṃ. Sabbato pabhaṃ assā ti sabbatopabhaṃ. Nibbānassa kira yathā mahāsamuddassa yato yato otaritukāmā honti tam tad eva titthaṃ; atitthaṃ nāma n'atthi. Evam eva aṭṭhatiṃsāya kammaṭṭhānesu yena yena mukhena nibbāṇaṃ osaritukāmā honti, tam tad eva titthaṃ nibbānassa.*

[10] Pāṇini, VI, 2, 8; VIII, 2, 50: *nivāte vātatrāne, nirvāno 'vāte.*

[11] *Ratana Sutta : nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṃ padīpo.*

[12] *Bhagavadgītā*, VI, 19: *Yathā dīpo nivātastho nengate sopamā smṛtā.*

[13] *Saundarananda*, XVI, 28; cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 487: *ayaṃ me purato aggi nibbuto ti . . . yo te ayaṃ purato aggi nibbuto so aggi ito katamaṃ disaṃ gato, puratthimaṃ vā pacchimaṃ vā uttaraṃ vā dakkhiṇaṃ vāti . . . Na upeti bho Gotama. Yam hi so bho Gotama aggi tiṇakaṭṭhupādānaṃ paṭicca ajali, tassa ca pariyādānā aññassa ca anupahārā anāhāro nibbuto.*

Although Aśvaghoṣa is most eloquent in his praise of the Master's Doctrine and the Order represented by the great Disciples of old, he is nowhere found expressly mentioning the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order as the Three Refuges. So far as the life of Nanda is concerned, the whole stress is laid on his personal devotion to the Master. The Śākyas are said to have 'devoutly made obeisance to the Great Sage':

*mahāmunau bhaktivaśāt praṇemuḥ* [1]

It is said of Nanda:

Atha saṃrādhito Nandaḥ śraddhāṃ prati maharṣiṇā |
pariṣikto'mṛteneva yuyuje parayā mudā ||
Kṛtārthamiva taṃ mene Saṃbuddhaḥ śraddhayā tayā |
mene prāptamiva śreyaḥ sa ca Buddhena saṃskṛtaḥ || [2]

'So on being confirmed in the direction of faith by the Great Seer, Nanda was filled with the highest joy, as if bathed in ambrosia. The Enlightened One deemed that Nanda had, as it were, attained his goal through that faith and he too deemed that by the Buddha's initiation he had, as it were, already reached the highest good.'

But such emphasis on the importance of personal devotion to the Buddha and following him as the *guru* laid by Aśvaghoṣa in the case of Nanda does not mean that he made a wide departure from the Hīnayāna tradition. It cannot be mistaken that his intention throughout is to establish the superior worth of the Three Refuges, namely, the *Tathāgata*, the *Mokṣadharma*, and the *Ārya Saṅgha* from the viewpoint of the *śaraṇāgati* which he himself adopted in preference to the one advocated in the Brahmanical tradition.

The first Refuge is the historical founder of Buddhism. As a man, he was most favourably situated. He got the best of fathers, the best of mothers, the best of foster-mothers, the best of wives, the best of brothers, the best of peoples, the best of racial heritages, and was born in the best of continents, the best of countries, the best of nationalities, the best of natural environs. As a person, he was highly gifted, best endowed with qualities, and possessed of the best bodily form and stature. As a personality, he proved himself to be the *Tathāgata*, the *Sugata* or well-gone, the *Jina* or conqueror, and the *Dharmacakra-pravartaka* or founder of a kingdom of righteousness on a solid and stable foundation. From the point of view of the disciples, such as Nanda and Śāriputra, he was the *vināyaka* or expert trainer, the *sārathī* or driver, the *maharṣi* or great seer, the *mahāmuni* or great contemplative, the *vaidehamuni*, the *hitaiṣī* or benefactor, the *mahākāruṇika* or *paramakāruṇika*, compassionate like father, mother or brother, the *śāstā* or teacher, the *mārga-kovida* or knower of the path, the *sudaiśika* or excellent guide, the *śalyoddhārakartā* or puller of the dirt, the *śokasya hartā śaraṇāgatānaṃ* or stealer of sorrow from the seekers of the refuge, the *śokasya kartā pratigarvitānāṃ* or causer of sorrow to the proud and conceited, and the like. The bodily marks of great men, the divine arrangements, the predictions, the supernormal faculties and other traditional methods of deifications are availed of in establishing his divinity and divine mission. But just as in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* the human character of Rāma is sought to be presented, so in the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa, the human side of the Buddha's personality is sought to be maintained and emphasized. Although the poetical dialogues in the *Bhagavadgītā* immensely influenced those in the *Saundarananda-kāvya*, the incongruities of thoughts are not

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[1] *Saundarananda*, V, 1. [2] *Ibid.*, XIII, 1-2.

sought to be harmonized in the bold declarations and claims of an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Supreme Being in the rôle of a teacher, guide, eye-opener and bringer of salvation. There is nowhere the attempt to overwhelm and overawe with an omniform. The predicates applied to the Master or the glowing compliments gratefully paid to him by Nanda, that is to say, by Aśvaghoṣa, are all in harmony and in keeping with those met with in the Sūtra literature and the traditions and words of the great disciples of the past—the *Theras* and the *Therīs*. [1] The definition of the Master as in the Mirror of Faith (*Dharmādarśa*) and the Lineage of Faith (*Dharmānvaya*) guided the Buddhist poet and teacher in this and other matters.

The third Refuge is the Saṅgha, better the Āryasaṅgha or Ideal Order. Aśvaghoṣa gives us a list of the great disciples of the past, which is almost in complete agreement with that of those placed foremost in different capacities and special gifts in the Etadaggavagga of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. [2] Aśvaghoṣa's list contains the names of such notable examples in the past in the practice of yoga as Kauṇḍinya, Nanda, Kṛmila, Aniruddha, Tiṣya, Upasena, Vimala, Rādha, Vāṣpa, Uttara, Dhautaki, Moharāja, Kātyāyana, Dravya, Pilindavatsa, Bhaddāli, Bhadrāyana, Sarpadāsa, Subhūti, Godatta, Sujāta, Vatsa, Saṃgrāmajit, Bhadrajit, Aśvajit, Śroṇa, Śoṇa Koṭikarṇa, Ajita, Upāli, Vāgīśa, Yaśas, Yaśoda, Mahāhvyaya, Valkalin, Rāṣṭrapāla, Sudarśana, Svāgata, Meghika, Kapphina, Kāśyapa of Uruvilvā, Mahāmahākāśyapa, Tiṣya, Nanda, Pūrṇa, Pūrṇaka, Pūrṇa Śonāparānta, Śāradvatīputra, Subāhu, Cunda, Kondeya, Kāpya, Bhṛgu, Kuṇṭhadhāna, Śaivala, Revata, Kauṣṭhila, Maudgalyāyana and Gavāmpati among the Theras, and Kṣemā and mothers of Nandaka and Nanda among the Therīs. [3] They are obviously pitted against the Ṛṣis of old, many of whom acquired notoriety for their moral pitfalls. The Ṛṣis mentioned by name are Vaśiṣṭha, Parāśara, Dvaipāyana, Aṅgiras, Kāśyapa, Aṅgada, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, and Sthūlaśiras. [4] It was not the intention of Aśvaghoṣa to make such an invidious distinction; it resulted incidentally from the description. The pitfalls of the sages and seers are stated just by way of illustration of the captivating powers and wily arts of women:

> Bhāvena garveṇa gatena lakṣmyā
> smitena kopena madena vāgbhiḥ |
> jahnuḥ striyo devanṛparṣisaṃghān . . . . . . . .[5]

'By their guiles, display, gait, grace, smiles, feigning of anger, infatuation and pleasant voices women captivated the body of divine and royal seers.' If Nanda among the Buddha's disciples were taken as typical of those with a passionate heart for the fair sex, he was taken by the hand by the great Guru, made to see things with his own eyes and understand the truth, with the happy result that he attained to Arhatship which is a saintly state above all moral pitfalls.

In the same skilful way the superiority of the Doctrine of Buddhism is suggested and sought to be established. The Doctrine consists of the main philosophy, the fundamental tenets, the prescribed methods and efforts, the ethical principles of conduct, the precepts, the ideal and the

[1] The predicates to be applied to the Buddha in the rôle of a Teacher are summed up in the *Paramatthajotikā*, I, pp. 21ff., *Sam.*, I, 47; III, 84; *Milinda*, 70; *Sam.*, I, 50, 132, 206, 301; *Aṅguttara*, I, 142; II, 33; III, 65; *Suttanipāta*, 157 foll.; *Sam.*, I, 186; *Dhammapadaaṭṭhakathā*, I, 233; *P.T.S. Dictionary*, s.v. *Buddha*.

[2] B. C. Law, *Early Buddhist Brothers and Sisters*, *JRASB*, XI, 1945, No. I, pp. 39ff.

[3] *Saundarananda kāvya*, XVI, 87–91.

[4] *Ibid.*, VII, 28–36.

[5] *Ibid.*, VII, 24.

*summum bonum.* If it be the task of philosophy to offer a rational and satisfactory explanation for pleasure and pain in the world, in individual lives, this explanation is to be found in the Buddha's doctrine of causation or dependent origination, [1] and not in God, not in the primordial matter, not in time, not in nature, not in fate, not in chance, not even in the Sāṃkhya doctrine of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*:

Pravṛtti-duḥkhasya ca tasya loke
  tṛṣṇādayo doṣagaṇā nimittaṃ |
naiveśvaro na prakṛtirna kālo
  nāpi svabhāvo na vidhiryadṛcchā || [2]

'Craving and such other flaws are the cause of suffering in the common run of the world, but neither a creator, nor primordial matter, neither time nor the nature of things, neither fate nor chance.'

And again:

Yataśca saṃskāragataṃ viviktaṃ
  na kārakaḥ kaścana vedako vā |
sāmagryataḥ sambhavati pravṛttiḥ
  śūnyaṃ tato lokamimaṃ dadarśa ||
Yasmānnirīhaṃ jagadasvatantraṃ
  naiśvaryamekaḥ kurute kriyāsu |
tattat pratītya prabhavanti bhāvā
  nirātmakaṃ tena viveda lokaṃ || [3]

'Since the individual is a mere creature of the saṃskāras, there is neither the agent nor the internal percipient. The common run (of the world) follows from the conjuncture of circumstances, he saw that the world is devoid of any abiding entity.' 'Since the world has no motive force of its own and is not self-dependent, and since there is no one being who exercises paramountcy over actions, and since states of being arise from dependence on other states, he understood the world to be without soul.'

Aśvaghoṣa has here faithfully represented the scholastic Hīnayāna definition of cause as meaning a combination of circumstances (*paccaya-sāmaggi*) sufficient in itself to account for the happening of events and refutation of all theories seeking to account for such happenings by any single cause or agent. [4]

A longer discussion of the issues raised is offered in the *Buddhacarita*, [5] and the longest in the Indian original of the Chinese *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*. [6] These discussions may be regarded as mere later elaborations of the three pairs of extreme positions in thought that were meant to be avoided [7] as well as of the canonical criticisms of the theory of creation by God, the doctrine of fate, and the doctrine of chance. [8]

The dialectics employed by Aśvaghoṣa in refuting the theistic idea of God clearly foreshadow the later treatise called Īśvarabhaṅgakārikā.

As to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga method of salvation advocated by Arāḍa Kālāma, we must observe that nowhere else in earlier Buddhist literature

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[1] *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king* (Beal's tr.), p. 194: 'Whatever things exist all spring from cause, the principles (cause) of birth and death (may be) destroyed, the way is by the means he has declared.' This is but a free Chinese rendering of the familiar Buddhist creed formula—*ye dharmāḥ hetuprabhavāḥ*, etc.

[2] *Saundarananda*, XVI, 17. [3] *Ibid.*, XVII, 20-21.

[4] Cf. *Atthasālinī*, pp. 59ff. [5] IX, 63–69. [6] XVIII, 15–65.

[7] Barua, *A History of pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, pp. 406ff.

[8] *Aṅguttara*, III, p. 440: *sabbaṃ ahetu-appaccayā, adhiccasamuppannā*; *Aṅguttara*, I, pp. 173ff.—*pubbekatahetu, issaranimmānahetu, ahetuappaccayā*; *Mahābodhi Jātaka* (Fausböll), V, pp. 237ff.

is the Sāṃkhya or philosophic aspect of Kālāma's doctrine described. It may be taken, however, for granted that the Yoga practice was inseparably linked up with Sāṃkhya or Adhyātmavidyā [1] standing for the ascertainment of the true and ultimate nature of the soul within each of us. It is rightly said in the *Bhagavadgītā*, V, 4-5:

> Sāṃkhya-yogau pṛthagbālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ |
> Yat Sāṃkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṃ tad yogairapi gamyate
> ekaṃ Sāṃkhyaṃ ca Yogaṃ ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati ||

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* the Sāṃkhya terms are employed to denote the gradation in the upward course of the Yogī from one stage of realization to another, the highest stage being reached when he gets to the *puruṣa*, and *puruṣa* alone, above the stage of the *avyakta* or unmanifest or unmodified state of the primordial matter. It is claimed that there is no stage to be reached higher than this:

> puruṣān na paraṃ kiṃcit, sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ |

This is in substance the Sāṃkhya-Yoga position as represented by Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva in the *Bhagavadgītā* and by Arāḍa Kālāma in the *Buddhacarita*. [2] The highest stage of trance reached by Arāḍa Kālāma, called *ākiṃcanya* or 'nothingness' [3] really means the stage in which there is awareness of the existence of nothing but the *puruṣa* or soul, the knower of the entire field of consciousness (*kṣetrajñaḥ*).

What is particularly important here to note is that the arguments put into the mouth of the ascetic Siddhārtha by way of criticism of Arāḍa's Sāṃkhya-Yoga method are all in the form of subtle dialectics reminding us at once of those employed extensively in the *Mādhyamika Kārikā* of Nāgārjuna (B.T.S. Ed., Chap. 24, verse 10, p. 180). The following three *ślokas* may suffice to indicate what they are or stand for:

> Guṇino hi guṇānāṃ ca vyatireko na vidyate |
> rūpoṣṇābhyāṃ virahito na hyagnirupalabhyate ||
> Prāgdehān na bhaveddehī prāgguṇebhyastathā guṇī |
> tasmādādau vimuktaḥ san śarīrī badhyate punaḥ ||
> Kṣetrajño viśarīraśca jño vā syādajña eva vā |
> yadi jño jñeyamasyāsti jñeye sati na mucyate || [4]

'For no distinction exists between the attributes and the possessor of the attributes, for instance, fire is not perceived, when devoid of outward appearance and heat. Before a conglomerate mass exists, there cannot be a possessor of the mass; so, before attributes exist, there cannot be a possessor of the attributes. Therefore the soul, as possessor of the body, being first released, is subsequently bound to it again.'

'And the knower of the field, when without a body, must be either knowing or unknowing. If it is knowing, there is something for it to know, and if there is something for it to know, it is not liberated.'

The upshot of the criticism offered is that the subject-object relation is not really transcended in the *Ākiñcanya* state of trance, it is just fancied that it is transcended. The *kleśas* remain latent. But this is the main point in the traditional Buddhist criticism of Arāḍa's, as also of Rudra

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[1] *Kaṭha Up*, II, 18:
labdhvā vidyāṃ etāṃ yogavidhiṃ ca kṛtsnaṃ |
Brahmaprāpto virajo'bhūddhi mṛtyur anyo-pyevaṃ yo vid adhyātmaṃ eva |

[2] XII, 17–65.

[3] *Ibid.*, XII, 63.

[4] *Buddhacarita*, XII, 76–78.

Rāmaputra's position. Aśvaghoṣa just made explicit what is implicit in the Sūtra texts.[1]

Aśvaghoṣa's representation of the Buddhist way of salvation as the Middle Path meaning the Noble Eightfold Path is thoroughly in keeping with the *Sūtras* and *Śāstras* which were authorities for him. The Tathāgata is said to have pointed out to his first five disciples:

'The emaciated devotee by suffering produces in himself confused and sickly thoughts, not conducive even to worldly knowledge, how much less to triumph over sense! . . . In seeking wisdom then it is not by these austerities a man may reach the law of life. But (likewise) to indulge in pleasure is opposed to right, this is the fool's barrier against wisdom's light. The sensualist cannot comprehend the *Sūtras* or the *Śāstras*, how much less the way of overcoming all desire! . . . I, then, reject both these extremes, my heart keeps in the middle way.'[2]

Although the best of hermit-life in calm, sombre, and peaceful sylvan surroundings was to be seen in the hermitage of Kapila, Aśvaghoṣa does not omit to mention that the path of asceticism could not lead to release from rebirth. With regard to the inmates of this hermitage, the Buddhist poet characteristically maintains:

> Saṃdigdhe'pyapunarbhāve viruddheṣvāgameṣvapi |
> pratyakṣiṇa ivākurvaṃstapo yatra tapodhanāḥ ||
> Yatra sma mīyate Brahma kaiścit kaiścinna mīyate |
> Kāle nimīyate somo na cākāle pramīyate ||
> Nirapekṣāḥ śarīreṣu dharme yatra svabuddhayaḥ |
> saṃhṛṣṭā iva yatnena tāpasāstepire tapaḥ ||
> Śrāmyanto munayo yatra svargāyodyuktacetasaḥ |
> taporāgena dharmasya vilopamiva cakrire ||[3]

'Though their release from rebirth was open to doubt and their scriptures were contradictory, yet the ascetics there practised asceticism as if possessed of supernormal perception (of its result). There some contemplated the Absolute; no one at all did hurt; *soma* was measured out at the proper time; and no one died untimely. There the ascetics, following their own opinions in the matter of religion and regardless of their bodies, practised austerities as if overjoyed with their toil. There the sages, with minds aspiring to Paradise, strove so hard that they seemed by their very passion for austerities to destroy religion (which consists in passionlessness).'

The other extreme course of life is made to be typified by the princely life led by Siddhārtha, and in a more accentuated form, by his half-brother Nanda. The life of a householder, especially in a royal house or aristocratic family, was taken to be typical of the life given up to the five varieties of sensual pleasure. For the description of the ugly, revolting and sensual scenes in a royal or aristocratic bed-chamber of the dancing girls sleeping pell-mell on the floor, the Buddhist poet need not be a borrower from Vālmīki's epic giving a vivid description of the scene Hanuman saw when he stealthily entered into Rāvaṇa's bed-chamber at night. All that we find in Aśvaghoṣa's kāvyas may be regarded just also as a later poetical elaboration of the short description contained in the *Vinaya Mahāvagga*,[4] the *Jātaka Nidāna-kathā*, and the like.

[1] Cf. Ariyapariyesana Sutta, *Majjhima*, I, pp. 161ff.
[2] *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king* (Beal's tr.), pp. 174-5.
[3] *Saundarananda*, I, 14–17.
[4] *Vinaya*, I, p. 15: *Tena kho pana samayena Bārāṇasiyaṃ Yaso nāma kulaputto seṭṭhiputto . . . vassike pāsāde cattāro māse nippurisehi turiyehi paricāriyamāno na*

Aśvaghoṣa's delineation of the diverse ways in which women try to captivate men's heart may similarly be viewed as an elaboration of the significant Jātaka expression, *itthi-kuttu-hāvabhāva-vilāsa* [1] meaning 'womanly wiles and guiles, gestures and postures'. But the Kunāla Jātaka enumerates the forty different signs by which a woman may seek to captivate a man. [2] These are certainly the artifices of lust that fall within the scope of the Indian science of erotic with which Aśvaghoṣa was intimately acquainted.

The aversion to or animadversion upon the fair sex (*strī-jugupsā*) in which Aśvaghoṣa has indulged *ad nauseam* is typically ascetic as well as Buddhistic, although, as it seems, the torments of sexual passion described by him have a personal note in them. In Aśvaghoṣa's *strī-jugupsā*, one has a clear anticipation of the reflections contained in the *strī-jugupsā* group of verses in the *Dharmasamuccaya* compiled in Nepal as the latest Sanskrit recension of the *Dhammapada*. [3]

The five *indriyas*, the five *balas*, the four noble truths, the seven *bodhyaṅgas*, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the remaining principal terms of Buddhism as a system of thought (*bodhipakṣikadharmāḥ*) are appropriately employed and authoritatively explained. Their opposites too, are fittingly set out in the traditional manner. The importance of *śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā* is sufficiently emphasized. The practice of *indriya-saṃvara* and *kāyagatā smṛti* and the obedience to the ethical principles receive their due importance. The successive stages of *śrāmaṇya* are set out and vividly described in the traditional manner of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta. [4] Aśvaghoṣa's presentation of Buddhism is saturated with Buddhist technical terms and ideas, phrases and idioms, similes and metaphors, maxims and many *obiter dicta*. If it appears that here and there are found conscious or unconscious borrowings of expressions and ideas from Brahmanical works, these are rather fruitful heritages from his previous study.

Let us, consider, for instance, Aśvaghoṣa's description of *śīla*. He declares:

> Śīlamāsthāya vartante sarvā hi śreyasi kriyāḥ |
> sthānādyānīva kāryāṇī pratiṣṭhāya vasundharāṃ || [5]
> ataḥ śīlaṃ nayatyagryamiti śīlaṃ viśodhaya | [6]
> Śīlanācchīlamityuktaṃ śīlanaṃ sevanādapi |
> sevanaṃ tannideśācca nideśaśca tadāśrayāt ||
> Śīlaṃ hi śaranaṃ saumya kāntāra iva daiśikaḥ |
> mitraṃ bandhuśca rakṣā ca dhanaṃ ca balameva ca || [7]

Here the first stanza crystallizes the ideas contained in the following words of the Buddha:

> Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño cittaṃ paññañca bhāvayaṃ [8]

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*heṭṭhā pāsādāṃ orohati. Atha kho Yasassa kulaputtassa pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappitassa samaṅgibhutassa paricāriyamānassa paṭigacc'eva niddā okkami, parijanassāpi pacchā niddā okkami, sabbarattiyo ca telappadīpo jhāyati. Atha kho Yaso kulaputto paṭigacc'eva paṭibujjhitvā addasa sakaṃ parijanaṃ supantaṃ, aññissā kacche vīṇā, aññissā kacche mudingaṃ, aññissā ure ālambaraṃ, aññaṃ vikesikaṃ, aññaṃ vikhelikaṃ aññā vippalapantiyo hatthapattaṃ susānam maññe.*

1 *Jātaka* (Fausboll), II, p. 128 f.n. 15.
2 *Jātaka*, V, pp. 433-34; B. C. Law, *Women in Buddhist Literature*, p. 51.
3 *Indian Culture*, Vol. III, p. 366.
4 *Saundarananda*, XVII; *Dīgha*, I.
5 *Ibid.*, XIII, 21.
6 *Ibid.*, XIII, 26.
7 *Ibid.*, XIII, 27-28.
8 *Saṃyutta*, I, pp. 13 and 165.

The characterization of *śīla* and the exposition of the subject as a whole cannot but remind us of what is significantly brought out in the *Milinda* (p. 34):

'ayaṃ patiṭṭhā dharaṇī va pāṇinaṃ,
idañca mūlaṃ kusalābhivuddhiyā,
mukhañ c'idaṃ sabbajinānusāsane
yo sīlakhandho varapātimokkhiyoti.'

'This is the foundation—like the earth to human beings—this is the root of increase in goodness, this is the beginning of the teaching of all conquerors (Buddhas), this is the moral precept as laid down in the excellent Pātimokkha.'

In the *Visuddhimagga* (P.T.S., I, pp. 8ff.) too, *sīlana* is mentioned as the distinctive characteristic of *sīla*.

It is undeniable that the *Bhagavadgītā* [1] lays much stress on the need of *śraddhā* (faith) for a devotee. But that does not mean that the Buddhist poet was much influenced by it. Aśvaghoṣa's *śraddhā* is the first of the five *indriyas* and *balas* of Buddhism. The representation of *śraddhā* as the seed (*bījaṃ*) of higher life [2] is thoroughly Buddhistic. With the canonical dictum, *saddhā bījaṃ*,[3] it was easy for Aśvaghoṣa to elaborate the idea as follows:

Punaśca bījamityuktā nimittaṃ śreyasotpadā |
pāvanārthena pāpasya nadītyabhihitā punaḥ ||
Yasmāddharmasya cotpattau śraddhā kāranamuttamaṃ |
mayoktā kāryatastasmāt tatra tatra tathā tathā ||
Śraddhāṅkuramimaṃ tasmāt saṃvardhayitumarhasi |
tad vṛddhau vardhate dharmo mūlavṛddhau yathā drumaḥ || [4]

The same remark applies with equal force to the Buddhist poet's delineation of *vīrya* (energy) and other faculties and powers.

One may naturally be inclined to trace the influence of the then known Sāṃkhya doctrine in Aśvaghoṣa's definition of *duḥkha* (suffering), according to which the essence of suffering is the impediment to free will (*bādhātmakaṃ duḥkhamidaṃ*).[5] The mention of fluidity as the essential quality of the element of water and hardness as that of earth (*apāṃ dravatvaṃ kaṭhinatvamurvyāḥ*),[6] and representation of the purposes of religious efforts (*samyak pradhānāḥ*) in such negative terms as *alabdhasyālābho niyatamupalabdhasya vigamaḥ* [7] also bear testimony to his previous study of the Brahmanical system of thought. The four terms, *sāma*, *dāna*, *bheda* and *daṇḍa*, connoting the fourfold policy of the state [8] may similarly point to Brahmanical works on polity as their source. But these are commonplaces for a learned and intelligent man like Aśvaghoṣa born and brought up in Brahmanical tradition. The main trend of his thought is Buddhistic, nothing but Buddhistic. If other ideas came along with it, they did so as they were found not incompatible with the Buddhist mode of thinking.

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[1] IV, 39-40; VI, 47; VII, 21-22; XVII, 2-3.

[2] *Saundarananda*, XII, 39.

[3] 'Saddhā bījaṃ, tapo vuṭṭhi, paññā me yuganaṅgalam.'—*Sutta Nipāta* (P.T.S.), p. 13.

[4] *Saundarananda*, XII, 39–41.

[5] *Ibid.*, XVI, 4.

[6] *Ibid.*, XVI, 12.

[7] *Ibid.*, XVI, 95; cf. Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, I, 4, *alabdhalābhārthā, labdhaparirakṣaṇī*.

[8] *Saundarananda*, XV, 61.
*Sāmnā dānena bhedena daṇḍena niyamena vā |*
*prāpto hi rabhaso mṛtyuḥ pratihantuṃ na śakyate ||*

## Chapter V

# AŚVAGHOṢA'S DELINEATIONS

The effectiveness of Aśvaghoṣa's narration is freely admitted as a distinctive feature of the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa. In the preceding chapter we have tried to show how the great Buddhist poet sought to exhibit his art of delineation through an easy-flowing narration of episodes. In other words, how men and things as depicted by him were to assume an ideal character of their own. His art of narration has so far been sufficiently emphasized but not his art of delineation of characters. The two kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa may be shown to differ from each other in these respects. In the *Buddhacarita* the art of delineation is subordinated to that of narration, while in the *Saundarananda* the latter is subordinated to the former. The reasons for this difference are not, perhaps, far to seek.

A connected life of the Buddha was being developed by his disciples within the Vinaya framework of the Buddhist ecclesiastical history. In the two Pali or Theravāda Vinaya Books called *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga*, the narration of historical episodes commences from the attainment of Buddhahood and closes with the account of the second Buddhist council. The earlier life of the Buddha covered by the careers of Siddhārtha as a Śākya prince and as an ascetic is left there altogether out of account. The earlier life which was gradually developed in the Vinaya texts of other sects may be shown to have its framework in the Pali *Mahāpadāna Suttanta* [1] in which the term *Pātimokkha-uddesa* [2] is employed to mean the declaration of the higher ethical principles such as those contained in the *Dhammapada*, and not that of the sections and rules of the Vinaya code of *Pātimokkha*. The *Mahāpādāna Suttanta* gives a clear hint at the growing tendency of the Buddhist mind to attach greater importance to the imitation of the Master's life or to the ethical and spiritual side of Buddhism rather than to follow a legal or formal code of conduct. Through the successive rise of the Buddhist sects and schools of thought one may watch with interest how the history of the church was gradually outweighed by the life-history of the Buddha. There was a backward move from the Buddhahood to the birth of Siddhārtha, and therefrom by further and further extension into the past to the commencement of the life of the Bodhisattva in the *praṇidhāna* or mental resolve of the hermit Sumedha to become a Buddha. Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita*, starts the history from the birth of Siddhārtha and closes it with the redistribution and enshrinement of the bodily remains of the Buddha by king Aśoka. It is just the First Buddhist Council that finds mention in his kāvya.

The case is quite different with his later kāvya called *Saundarananda*. The Nanda episode which is used as the main theme of narration formed also one of the many episodes of the great career of the Buddha as the teacher of gods and men. The same holds true of the Śāriputra episode which is made the main theme of Aśvaghoṣa's drama, the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. Thus the Nanda episode is relevantly fitted into the frame of the life of the Buddha. But here the Buddhist poet appears to have a free hand to consciously devote himself to the task of poetic delineation of men

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[1] *Dīgha*, II, pp. 1–54.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 46—*pātimokkhuddesāyāti*.

and things in their ideal forms. The dramatic art employed in the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* is essentially the one and the same art of delineation of characters. Here we shall take up for consideration some typical delineations.

To raise the importance of the Śākya territory and to increase the significance of the cultural heritage of the Śākya race it was felt necessary to describe eulogistically the life and attainment of Ṛṣi Kapila and the beauty and glory of his abode or hermitage after which the Śākya royal city was named. Aśvaghoṣa is careful, however, not to openly represent Ṛṣi Kapila as the propounder of the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy, although he speaks of him as being a *Siddha*. In the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita* (XXI, 24), one Ṛṣi Kapila is said to have been converted by the Buddha to his new faith during his visit to Mahīvatī (Māhiṣmatī?). Evidently this Kapila was a different individual.

The virtuous sage Kapila belonging to the family of Gautama had his abode in the Himalayan region. He practised asceticism like Kāśyapa and attained the highest proficiency in it. He used to instruct his disciple in religion like Vaśiṣṭha. The place where he fixed his abode was adorned with fruits and flowers, lotus ponds, and beautiful forests. It was full of peacocks and antelopes. Here several hermits used to observe religious practices and perform religious sacrifices with *soma* juice. They looked upon *dharma* as their only wealth. Some princes of the Ikṣvāku family came to this abode to lead a forest life. Their body was like a golden pillar and their breast was like that of a lion. They had strong arms but they were endowed with grace and humbleness. Sage Kapila became their teacher. The princes became known as Śākyas, because they built a city here and lived in it surrounded by the Śāka trees. After Kapila went to heaven they killed elephants and tigers. The hermits seeing their nature left the forest and took shelter in the Himalayan mountain. The princes became sorrowful knowing that the hermits left the place. They got many wealth buried in the earth and afterwards built a beautiful city surrounded by a wide moat, having large roads and high walls like Girivraja, the capital of Magadha. This city also contained beautiful mansions and well-built houses.[1] They appointed capable, wealthy and honest relatives as royal officers, and ministers. They also built many beautiful gardens, ponds, and mote-halls with wells on all sides. This city was full of elephants, horses, and chariots. Nobody was proud of his wisdom and strength. There was no hidden treasure. It was an abode of learning and affluence. Here lived the virtuous and the learned. People were not oppressed by unlawful taxes and this was the reason why it became very populous. The city became known as Kapilavāstu because it was built in the hermitage of the sage Kapila, just as the city of Kākandī was built in the hermitage of Kakanda, and Mākandī in that of Makanda, and Kauśāmbī in that of Kuśāmba. Here the princes became famous on account of their absence of pride and strength befitting an Aryan. They were very much attached to their eldest brother who began to rule righteously like an overlord being surrounded by his brothers.

King Śuddhodana, father of Sarvārthasiddha and Nanda, was the most illustrious scion of the Śākya race to whom the Śākya realm passed by lineal succession. He was unattached to worldly passions; the accession to sovereignty did not make him insolent, nor did prosperity make him despise others. He was strong and resolute, learned in the sacred lore, wise and brave, invincible before the foe, skilled in counsel, steadfast and

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[1] Cf. *Jinacarita*, vv. 66-67.

gracious. [1] He was handsome yet unpretentious, courteous yet straightforward, courageous yet forbearing, masterly yet without arrogance. He was backward neither in bravery nor in liberality. He eagerly trod the traditional path of righteousness, earnestly dedicating himself to his kingly duties. Owing to his wise rule, excellent administration and efficient protection, his subjects lived peacefully and without fear. He stood as a living example of virtue and piety to the people. When he made a promise he meant to keep it and from the path of truth he never swerved but adhered to it even at the cost of life. Resplendent with self-control, glowing with virtue, and pleasing he was to the cultured. As a typical Indo-Aryan king, he regularly studied the Vedas, drank *soma* according to ritual and befittingly guarded his fame. As he was the invincible king of the Śākyas, the vassal princes were all submissive to him. He was fully possessed of all kingly might and majesty, virtues and powers. By his conduct as a royal seer he increased the fame of his family and spread abroad his ancestors' good name. He had for his advisers the best of the ministers, and his selection of the officers was always a happy one. Himself an unwearied worshipper in due season, he caused the sacrificial ground to be laid out, and he enabled the Brahmins to meditate on Brahman without any hindrance.

The god-like king had for his chief queen Māyā, a veritable Śacī, who was in beauty like Padmā (lotus, according to the Chinese version), in steadiness like the earth, and incomparable like the goddess Māyā. She was of a pure nature, and free from anger, illusion and pride. According to Cowell's edition of the *Buddhacarita*, she behaved as a mother to the subjects. She was faithful in her duties to the superiors, and stood like the goddess of Luck in the Royal House. She kept the religious vows and the lovely forest suited to trance had a special fascination for her. It was in the womb of such a mother that the Bodhisattva, destined to be the Buddha and the saviour of mankind, took his birth. But the king had another queen, the younger one, Gautamī by name of whom was born prince Nanda. The king who was a loving and dutiful father stood between his two sons like the Middle Country placed between the Himalayas and the Pāripātra mountains. [2]

Thus the difference aptly suggested between the dispositions and attainments of two brothers, sons of the same father, is one between the highest mountain range of the Himalaya and the much lesser range of the Pāripātra. The elder brother, prince Sarvārthasiddha, was destined to attain Buddhahood, to found the kingdom of righteousness, and to lead gods and men along the right path to salvation, while the younger brother was destined to attain Arhatship under the training and guidance and instruction of his brother, teacher and loving *guru*. The elder brother was by his nature averse to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, while the younger brother was passionately fond of them and inordinately attached to his wife.

Before, at and after his birth, prince Sarvārthasiddha had all things extraordinary about him. He agreed to descend on the earth from the Tuṣita heaven in response to an earnest supplication of the gods and angels. From his birth his father, king Śuddhodana, gradually grew mightier in the

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[1] Cf. *Jinacarita*, v. 68.

[2] The range of Aśvaghoṣa's movements seems to have confined to the Middle Country placed between the Himavat and the Pāripātra (*Saundarananda*, II, 62), the Himavat on the north, the Vindhyakaṣṭha (*Buddhacarita*, VII, 54), Vindhyapādas (*B.*, XIII, 38) and the Pāripātra on the west and the Girivraja on the east.

possession of riches, strength of the army and allies. The royal city had richly decked horses, the kingdom came to have many excellent cows in abundant milk, the king's enemies became neutrals, the heaven rained in due time and place, the plenty of crops was harvested, all were free from want, none was poverty-stricken save and except the ascetics whose mortification of the flesh was a self-inflicted penance. Just as in the kingdom of Yayāti, son of Nahuṣa, so in the Śākya territory none was disrespectful to the elders, irreligious, deceitful or hurting. Here none was lacking in generosity. All signs of aggression, invasion, lawlessness and immorality disappeared. At the prince's birth in the kingdom of Śuddhodana, as in that of Manu Vaivasvata, joy prevailed, evil perished, piety blazed forth and sin was quenched. The immensity of the power of his newly born son, like that of a divine seer, was such that queen Māyā was unable to bear the joy it caused her; she thereupon went to Heaven to dwell there, not to say, she died.

The gentleness and outspokenness of nature is the common trait of the two brothers. Nevertheless, one of them could in no way be persuaded to keep entreaties of others and the other could be easily persuaded to do so. Thus from the worldly point of view one was disobliging and the other obliging. Prince Siddhārtha was in the pleasure-garden with his companion, Udāyin, son of his father's chaplain, who was well versed in the science of erotics and politics. There the youthful damsels and opera girls made open overtures of sexual passion and advances of love. They were skilled in all the arts, adepts at captivating the feelings, possessed of beauty and charm, and pre-eminent in their endowments. With these *gifts they might even grace the northern Kurus and the pleasance of* Vaiśravana Kubera. They could shake even lust-free seers and captivate the gods. The bodily form of the royal prince was so perfect, the glory of the brilliant signs of his person was so dazzling, benignity and gravity in his looks were such that these damsels approached him with their eyes wide open in wonder, welcoming him respectfully, with hands folded like lotus-buds. They stood around him with their minds absorbed in love, deeming him to be the god of love in bodily form, or the moon down on earth with the rays veiled. They made gestures to cause rapture with brows, looks and blandishments, with laughter, frolicking and movements. Udāyin pleaded on behalf of the women, saying, 'courtesy is the balm of women, courtesy is the best of ornaments; beauty without courtesy is like a grove without flowers. What is the good of courtesy only? Accept them with genuine feeling.' [1] Udāyin's pleadings were not without reproach for the prince's coldness and callousness. The prince listened to his words, supported by scriptural tradition, and replied to him, saying, 'It is not that I despise the objects of sense and I know that the world is devoted to them; but my mind does not delight in them, because I hold them to be transitory. If the triad of old age, disease and death did not exist, I too should take my pleasure in the ravishing objects of sense.' [2]

When Siddhārtha after renunciation saw the hermitage of Bhārgava with the deer sleeping in perfect trust and the birds sitting at peace, he alighted from his horse to show honour to asceticism and in accordance with his politeness. With the gait of a lion he entered that arena of a deer, himself like a deer. At the sight of him, the lamp of the Ikṣvāku race, shining like the rising sun, the inmates of the hermitage felt amazed as it seemed to them as if the Eighth Vasu or one of the Aśvins came down to earth. When the chief of the ascetics requested him to dwell there and

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[1] *Buddhacarita*, IV, 70-71. [2] *Ibid.*, IV, 85-86.

his disciples left nothing to be desired as regards hospitality, the princely ascetic spoke these words, gracious and significant, very gentle yet determined and dignified: 'When I reflect that I am about to go away, leaving you thus engaged, who are so hospitable and have shown me such very great kindness, I feel indeed as much grief as I did when quitting my kinsfolk. But your *dharma* aims at Paradise, while my desire is for release from rebirth and leads me not to wish to dwell in this grove. For the *dharma* of cessation from activity is apart from the continuance of active being. It is not for dissatisfaction on my part or for an offence committed by anyone else that I am going forth from this grove; for you are all like the great seers, in that you take your stand on a *dharma* that conforms with the primeval ages.' [1]

The chief minister and chaplain of king Śuddhodana set out for the forest in search of the Śākya prince. They saw him sitting on the road at the foot of a tree blazing with his form like the sun when it is in the midst of a circle of cloud. They paid him due honour, as Śukra and Āṅgirasa did to the mighty Indra in heaven, which was duly reciprocated. They sat down with his permission on either side of the banner of the Śākya race and close to him, resembling the twin stars of Punarvasu in conjunction with the moon. They persuaded him, though in vain, to return to Kapilavāstu, making their entreaties on the strength of the arguments based on worldly wisdom and the pangs of separation felt by his father, foster-mother, wife and son, other members of the royal household and the citizens of the royal capital. He listened to their words, and made an excellent and courteous reply in these words: 'I am fully aware of the feelings fathers have for their sons, more especially that which the king has for me; but though I know it, I am afraid of disease, old age and death and have no alternative but to quit my kindred. For, if in the end there were not parting from one's dear ones, who would not wish to see his dear kinsfolk?' [2]

The firmness of his resolve is significantly expressed in the following terms: 'I may not have seen yet the final truth, the reality of good and evil may be in dispute, and yet my decision is to follow the good. For better is the toil, though vainly, of the man who pursues the good. The scriptural tradition is uncertain. The instances of Rāma and others, quoted to justify my return, do not prove your case. Such being the case, the sun may fall to the earth, Mount Himavat may lose its firmness, but I will not return as a worldly man who has not beheld the final truth and whose senses are attracted by the objects of pleasure. I would rather enter a blazing fire than return home with the goal unattained.' [3]

The self-same traits of Siddhārtha's nature and character are set out and emphasized in and through his interesting conversation with king Bimbisāra. [4] The king of Magadha is introduced as one who was 'in heroism the peer of Pāṇḍu's son, in stature like a mountain, a lion-man with the gait of a lion'. The Bodhisattva appeared to him to be 'as it were a peak of the mountain and shining like the moon rising out of a bower of clouds,' seated 'in the majesty of his beauty and in holy tranquillity, like some being magically projected by *Dharma*'. When Bimbisāra spoke to him with a friendly face and in most cordial terms, the son of Śuddhodana paid all the compliments due to a noble scion of the Haryaṅka family, but he did not fail to conclude his effective reply with these pregnant words expressive of the same resoluteness of his will: 'I have not entered the forest because of any anger nor have I cast aside my diadem because of enemy arrows,

[1] *Buddhacarita*, VII, 47–49.
[2] *Buddhacarita kāvya*, IX, 31-32.
[3] *Ibid.*, IX, 75–79.
[4] Cf. Suttanipāta, *Pabbajā Sutta*.

nor have I set my ambitions on loftier enjoyments, that I decline this proposal of yours. But I deem the highest goal of a man to be the stage in which there is neither old age, nor fear, nor disease, nor birth, nor death, nor anxieties, and in which there is not continuous renewal of activity.'

Although the germ of saintship was in prince Nanda, he was weak-minded and lacking in determination. But he was naturally so polite and courteous that when his elder brother, now the Buddha, asked him to come along carrying his bowl, he could not say no. The Buddha appeared at his door for alms when Nanda was spending his days merrily with his beautiful wife in a seven-storied house. A young maid saw the Blessed One going away without alms and told Nanda about it. Nanda had to leave his wife to go to the Buddha. But he and his wife were so much attached to each other—like a Kinnara couple, that it was difficult for him to remain away from her; his mind was occupied all along with the thoughts of her. He was ordained, nevertheless, as a mendicant. When asked, he did not conceal the fact about his inner longing to return to his wife. When he was shown the ravishing youth and soul-captivating beauty of the heavenly damsels (the *Apsarās*) in the Nandana grove, his interest was shifted from his wife to them. He began to lead the religious life and practise virtue for the sake of the heavenly nymphs. When Ānanda enquired of him if this was true, Nanda was shocked at heart. He heaved a deep sigh with downcast looks and a change of countenance betraying the emotions of his mind. 'From your demeanour I understand', said Ānanda, upbraiding him, 'why you follow the Law and knowing that, I am moved to laughter and compassion at the same time. You are striving to assume self-control for the sake of passion; it is as if a man were to carry about a heavy stone on his shoulder to sit down on. Just as a savage ram draws back in order to charge, so you are following the holy life for an object which is contrary to it.' Nanda felt highly ashamed when he was thus upbraided by his first cousin Ānanda for following the Law to get the nymphs. Though the passion of love predominated in him, he was not used to such ridicule. A great change for the better was brought about in him, his longings were diverted from Paradise. Seeing the nymphs he forgot his wife, and now he gave up the nymphs knowing them to be transitory as objects of pleasure.

Gautamī, [1] the aunt and step-and-foster mother of prince Siddhārtha, Yaśodharā, his wife, Sundarī, the wife of his younger step-brother, the maids of honour, the courtezans and opera-girls, the heavenly courtezans, and dancing girls are delineated by Aśvaghoṣa all in their purely womanly character. They are all loving and tender-hearted, sentimental and emotional. The lamentation is with them the natural mode of expression of their feelings, whether of affection, sorrow or separation.

At the departure of the prince to embrace the ascetic life and to wander alone, Gautamī's eyes became restless with despair. Unable to maintain self-control, she wailed aloud, like an osprey that has lost its nestlings. She swooned and her exclamations were all with a bestrewn face. She dwelt on the delicate forms of the prince's body and keenly felt for his physical discomforts, privations and pains. She touched his virtues as a man, the nobility of his race, his goodness, strength, beauty, learning, majesty and youth. The tears were contagious and sympathetic. Her piteous ravings drew tears in the eyes of other women in the palace who clasped one another with their arms, letting fall tears from their eyes, like shaken creepers that drop honey from their flowers.

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[1] Cf. *Therīgāthā—Commentary*, pp. 140–147.

Then came the turn of Yaśodharā who fell disconsolate on the ground [1] like a Brahminy duck without its mate. In her distress she uttered all sorts of lamentation with a voice choked up by sobs. 'If he wishes to carry out *dharma*', she complained, 'and yet casts me off, his lawful partner in the duties of religion and now husbandless, in what respect is there *dharma* for him who wishes to follow austerities separated from his lawful partner?' [2] The true sentiment of a loving and dutiful wife was expressed when she wailed, saying, 'My heart too is certainly exceeding hard, made of stone or even of iron, in that it does not break in its orphaned state, when my lord, accustomed to all pleasures, has departed to the forests, without his royal glory'. [3] Thus she fainted with grief for her husband, wept and brooded and lamented repeatedly. Thereupon other women around her mourned all aloud with tears on their faces. When Siddhārtha as a completely changed religious personality, as a perfect Buddha, revisited the Śākya royal city and Śuddhodana's royal palace, she did not enquire of her father-in-law if he had seen his son or not. But as she saw his beauteous person, she was much struck by his altered form which was then that of a hermit, and gracefully described to her child, Rāhula, the divine beauty and majesty of all the attractive marks that adorned his person, the marks of a 'great man' which would have gone to make him a universal monarch, had he chosen to remain in the world.

Sundarī was peerless among women as Nanda among men for their entrancing beauty. It seemed as if the creator had made them to surprise mortals. She stood like a divinity wandering in the Nandana grove, while Nanda was the cause of joy to his family. Three names she bore: Sundarī for her majesty and handsomeness, Māninī for her obstinacy and pride, and Bhāminī for her extreme beauty in love and for her spirit. She was like a lotus-pond in her womanly form with her laughter for the swans. She became restless as her dear husband did not come in time and she herself said thus: 'Oh lord, you are always afraid of me, you are very much attached to me. How is it that you have become so very indifferent to me? You may have fallen in love with another beautiful woman.' While she was thus lamenting, a lady entered into her room with fear, and with tears in her eyes spoke thus: 'As a cakravāka bird knows only its darling cakravākī, so he does not know any woman except you. He likes household life only for your sake and just to please you he desires to live. His brother, the Blessed Tathāgata, has ordained him.' Sundarī on hearing these words stood up and began to tremble. She cried in loud voice lifting up both her arms. Her eyes became red due to excessive crying. She threw away her ornaments and became very much restless. She could not find peace. She became tired, remained silent, and lamented much. The ladies who used to live near her palace became much grieved seeing her crying. An elderly lady embraced her and removed tears from her eyes; she then said thus: 'It is not fair to lament for the reason that the husband has taken shelter in *Dharma*. Asceticism is the ancestral property of the Ikṣvāku kings; it is not unknown to you that many wives of Śākya sages gave up their worldly life for the sake of salvation.' [4]

The Nandana is the pleasure grove of Indra, the bearer of the thunderbolt. The Pārijāta tree shines there with all its majesty. Of other trees, some put forth blossoms in their season, some in all seasons, some bear sweet-smelling garlands and wreaths of various kinds, some look like candelabra adorned with red lotuses. All the trees provide enjoyment for

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[1] Cf. *Lalitavistara*, Chap. 15.
[2] *Buddhacarita*, VIII, 61.
[3] *Ibid.*, VIII, 69.
[4] *Saundarananda*, Canto VI, 39-40.

the dwellers in heaven. Of the birds, some have beaks of the hue of red arsenic, crystal-like eyes, dark brown wings, and feet of the colour of red madder and half white. There are other varieties of wonderful birds. The amorous nymphs are full of joy and ravishing beauty. The grove is ever joyful, free from sorrow and grief, and all are youthful there. It appears to be a world which is in perpetual feast and free from exhaustion, drowsiness, disgust, disease or grief. Compared with it, the world of men looks no better than a cemetery, it being subject to disease, decay and death, affliction and grief.

The Śākya city of Kapilavāstu became joyful at the arrival of Siddhārtha as the Enlightened One. It became free from epidemic or disaster, like the city of Kuru, or of Raghu, or of Puru. No one experienced any danger from himself or from others or from fate. All rejoiced there as in the golden age of Manu, in happiness, plenty and virtue. King Śuddhodana obtained the first fruit of holy life. Many Śākya nobles renounced the world; those who were unable to do so owing to their affection for their children or parents, undertook to observe the precepts of conduct. The poor and the indigent abstained from coveting the wealth of others and stealing the goods of others. The rich lived a life free from lust and other passions. All were compassionate to all, never thinking of hurting anybody. They grasped the sound doctrine, all became free from questionings and held the highest and purest views.

Māra [1] is the supreme ruler of the world where passions have their free play, and beings are all subject to disease, decay and death. He is the flower-arrowed god of love (*Kāmadeva*) who is the sworn enemy of the good law and liberation. Caprice (*Vibhrama*), gaiety (*Harṣa*) and wantonness (*Darpa*) are his three sons, and discontent (*Arati*), delight (*Rati*) and thirst (*Tṛṣṇā*) are his three daughters. [2] His army consists of his followers who appear in many ghastly forms and carry various weapons. Some have the faces of boars, fishes, horses, asses, and camels or the countenances of tigers, lions, and elephants; some are one-eyed, many-mouthed, three-headed with pendulous and speckled bellies. Some are without knees or thighs, or with pot-sized knees, or armed with tusks or talons, with skulls for faces, with many bodies or mutilated faces. All conceivable ugly, horrible and terrific shapes, forms and countenances are given to them. All grimaces, frownings, frightenings, hurlings, brandishings, wild orgies are described as their characteristic actions. Māra is a stubborn fighter and artful at the same time. All means he tries from the hurling of rocks and mountains down to coaxing and cajoling, enticing and softening to keep all under his sway. His daughters are the bewitchers of hearts of men, his sons are generators of violent passions in them, while his forces are suckers of the vital essence and of the mind. His exhortation to the Śākya prince whose mind was bent on the immortal state of *nirvāṇa* was: 'Follow your own (traditional path of) *dharma*, give up the *dharma* of liberation. Subdue the world both with arrows and with sacrifices, and from the world obtain the world of Vāsava.' [3]

The world (*jagat*) is without substance or certainty. It goes to an evil end. Since it is transitory, strength is not durable. One may cynically ask where is the strength of Kārtavīrya, the thousand-armed Arjuna? Where is the strength of Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Kaṃsa? Where is the

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[1] Vide B. C. Law, The Buddhist Conception of Māra, *Buddhistic Studies*, Chapter X, pp. 257 foll.

[2] *Buddhistic Studies* (Ed. B. C. Law), p. 259; *Niddesa*, I, 96; Suttanipāta—*Padhāna Sutta*.

[3] *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 9.

strength of Namuci, the son of Diti, or of the Kurus, or of those mighty ones who boasted of their heroism and strength? Here what holds true of strength holds equally true of the beauty of bodily form, wealth, possession, prosperity, and happiness. Both in this world and hereafter passion is the cause of suffering only and does not stand for anyone's advantage. Here inevitably all phenomena come into being from not-being and pass away again from being into not-being and since they all have a cause and that is a transitory one, the world is impermanent (*anityaṃ*). Since the union with *karman* of whatever is born is continually operative, and it is the cause of bondage and destruction, the mundane existence is suffering (*duḥkhaṃ*). Since the individual is a mere creature of the *saṃskāras* [1] and there is neither agent nor knower, and gliding in the cycle of painful existence follows from the conjuncture of circumstances, the world is devoid of entity (*śūnyam*). Since the world has no motive force of its own, nor is it dependent on itself, since there is no single being who has paramountcy over actions, and states of being follow from other states, the world is without soul (*nirātmakaṃ*). *Saṃsāra* [2] means the gliding of individuals in the cycle of repeated births and deaths led by craving which is rooted in ignorance. As long as this gliding continues, calamities of many sorts, old age and the rest are produced. The existence of the body is attended with disease, decay and death, hunger and thirst, heat and cold, while the existence of mind with its concomitants involves suffering such as grief, dejection, anger, fear and the like. Suffering and nothing but suffering is the fate of corporeality. It is *Nirvāṇa* that stands in contrast to the world. *Nirodha*, [3] *nirmokṣa*, [4] *nirvṛti*, [5] and *nirveda* [6] are its different synonyms. The end of suffering follows from the exhaustion of the cause of it. *Nirvāṇa* [7] is the blissful, peaceful element,—the refuge which is free from the passion of craving. It makes all *bhavas* leading to pain subside. It is the salvation which is eternal, unassailable, and noble. It means the cessation of the whole of suffering. It is that supreme state in which there is neither birth, nor decay, nor disease, nor death, nor contact with what is disagreeable, neither disappointment nor separation from what is agreeable. It is that state which is tranquil, final and imperishable.[8] Just a lamp extinguishes for ever from the exhaustion of the oil and does not depart to the earth or the sky or any of the quarters, so the saint who has reached *nirvāṇa*, does not come back to the earth.[9] In his case the salvation means the exhaustion of corrupting factors; it is tranquillity only. By extinguishing the blazing fire of the passions with the water of steadfastness, the saint comes to the highest happiness, like a man descending into a cool pool in the hot weather. There is no more for him anything which is agreeable or disagreeable, liking or disliking; he feels joy because of their absence. Like one who has obtained safety after a great danger, or deliverance from great oppression, or light in darkness, or the safe shore, or like one who has gained in health after an unbearable illness, or release from a great debt, or escape from the face of a chasing enemy, or plenty after scarcity, the saint comes to supreme state of peace.

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[1] Saṅkhāras of Pali Buddhism. Cf. *Kathāvatthu*, 395; *Visuddhimagga*, 530ff; *Majjhima*, III, 99; *Dīgha*, II, 157; II, 193, etc., etc.
[2] B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 82-83.
[3] *S.*, XVI, 26. *Nirodha* is that of the self in which consciousness transcends the sphere of senses and their objects. B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, p. 29.
[4] *S.*, V, 15; VIII, 62; XVIII, 16.
[5] *S.*, XVI, 29.
[6] *Ibid.*, 44.
[7] For a detailed exposition, vide B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 76ff.
[8] *Saundarananda*, XVI, 27.
[9] *Ibid.*, XVI, 28-29.

In the Noble Eightfold Path as propounded by the Buddha lies the sure way to *nirvāṇa* or salvation. It is just another name for the Middle Path which discards the two extreme courses of life, one consisting in the practice of self-mortification and the other in a free indulgence in sensual pleasures. Neither of them affords us the way to the highest wisdom, nor do they bring us to true release. The first is violent and destructive of its own purpose by its extreme rigour. The second is like the way of a sickly man who eats food, not fit to eat. Of the eight factors that constitute the Noble Eightfold Path, [1] right speech, right action and right livelihood are to be practised in the sphere of conduct for the mastery of the actions (*śīlāśrayaṃ karmaparigrahāya*); right view, right resolve and right effort are to be practised in the sphere of knowledge for the destruction of passions causing affliction (*prajñāśrayaṃ kleśaparikṣayāya*), and right mindfulness and right concentration are to be practised in the sphere of tranquillity for the control of mind (*śamāśrayaṃ cittaparigrahāya*). Thus the Noble Eightfold Path involves, on the whole, the threefold practice of *śīla*, *śama* (i.e. *samādhi*) and *prajñā*. Broadly speaking it is the development of the five controlling faculties and powers called *śraddhā* (faith), *vīrya* (energy), *smṛti* (mindfulness), *samādhi* (concentration), [2] and *prajñā* [3] (knowledge). The central idea behind all these is the practice of *Yoga* or meditation without which neither the highest happiness nor the highest knowledge is attainable.

Śīla [4] is good behaviour or conduct of a person in accordance with the precepts laid down. In the absence of such behaviour or conduct there can be no proper life either for a mendicant or for a householder. It is therefore meet to live the holy life which is attended with good conduct, keeping firmly to one's vows and perceiving the danger in the smallest of faults. It is by taking one's stand on good conduct that all actions in the sphere of the supreme good are possible. It is the moral foundation of the higher life. Salvation is possible through freedom from passion, this freedom through right understanding, right understanding through intuition, and vision, these through concentration, concentration through mental and bodily ease, ease through stillness, stillness through joy, joy through joyousness, joyousness through a clear conscience in the matter of deeds, and this through the purity of morals. Good behaviour or moral conduct implies moral discipline which comes from habitual practice, habitual practice from keen desire for a thing and this from dependence on it. Moral conduct is the refuge, the guide as it were in the wilderness, the friend, the kinsman, the protector, wealth and strength.

If good behaviour or moral conduct is the outer expression of an interval state of mind centred in self-control, this control is possible through *Yoga* which enables us to hold back the senses from their objects and to reach tranquillity through concentration, while *prajñā* enables us to grasp the true nature of things and that of the way of escape from all that bind us

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[1] B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism* (Kern Institute Monograph), pp. 34–36.

[2] In *samādhi* all thoughts are simultaneously and rightly centred on a particular subject. Its characteristic is absence of distraction, its immediate cause is firmness and its remote cause is happiness. Regarding purity and impurity of *samādhi*, vide B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 38ff.

[3] It is *paññā* of Pali Buddhism, which may also be translated as wisdom. According to Mahāyāna Buddhists, the nature of *Dharma* is the perfection of wisdom. Being free from darkness of ignorance one should practice prajñā-pāramitā—Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 69; cf. *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, 16; *Dīgha*, I, 62ff; *Suttanipāta*, 77, 329, etc., etc.

[4] *Vinaya*, II, 162; *Saṃyutta*, IV, 342; *Saṃyutta*, II, 68; *Milinda*, 333; *Aṅguttara*, IV, 248ff.

to the world. The real urge to the higher and progressive life comes from *śraddhā* [1] meaning faith, belief, confidence as well as aspiration. Just as a man begins to dig the earth only when he believes that there is water underneath and he has need of it, or rubs the fire-stick only when he has need of fire and believes in its existence in the firestick, or sows seed in the soil only when he believes in the growth of corn there and feels need of it, so he begins to cherish the longing for the Law only when he sincerely believes in the growth of higher life through it and feels its need. Faith may be called the Hand since it grasps the Good Doctrine of itself, as a hand receives a gift. It is described as the faculty because of its paramountcy in control, as strength because of its steadfastness, and as wealth since it places us above the want of virtue. It is to be called the Reed-arrow because of its power of protecting the Law and the Jewel. It is indeed the seed from which the highest good originates and the river which cleanses us from sins. With the growth of faith grows the Law, as a tree grows with the growth of its root. But as long as the truth is not seen or heard, so long faith does not become strong and firm. When along with self-control the real truth is seen, the tree of faith bears fruit and becomes the vehicle of progress.

Energy (*vīrya*) which is released after the seed of faith is sown in the proper soil is of the greatest import. It is the means by which one may proceed to accomplish what is to be done. Without energy nothing can be accomplished, all success in the world is due to energy. Where there is no energy, there is no acquisition of what has not been acquired, and there is, on the other hand, the loss of what has been acquired. Indolence or lethargy is the cause of man's degradation. It leads him to a lower plane of existence. Indolence is the hindrance to a man's progress in life. A man gets water if he digs the earth with incessant energy. He produces fire from the fire-sticks by continuous friction. It is by ploughing the soil, and by guarding the field with great pain that a man harvests a splendid crop. By diving strenuously into the ocean the diver collects splendid jewels to rejoice over. Energy must, therefore, be displayed for the sake of tranquillity which is the ultimate goal of the holy life. [2]

The term *smṛti* stands for the practice of mindfulness or mental awareness by a Yogin. It requires the aspirant to be fully conscious of all his actions, experiences, feelings, thoughts and the like. It requires him to fix his attention on all his bodily movements, deportments and postures. He is to guard his thoughts in all circumstances. Loss of attention makes us off the guard. It is attention that enables a person to go after all the virtues, moral discipline, and the like. The everlasting good is lost to a person if his attention is distracted. A man without attention proceeds aimlessly. Concentration (*samādhi*) and knowledge (*prajñā*) result both from the practice of *Yoga*. Concentration leads to the tranquillity of mind and through knowledge the Yogin has the true apprehension of the nature of the four noble truths. Here one is auxiliary to the other. A passionate man, who has not attained tranquillity of feelings, fails to find the Path. An enquiring man who has not perceived the truth and is obsessed with the presentation of sensual objects, cannot easily restrain his mind.

With the heart appeased and serene, a yogin reaches discrimination. The surest way of salvation lies through a thorough grasp of the four

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[1] *Dīgha*, I, 63; III, 164 foll.; *Saṃyutta*, I, 172; *Aṅguttara*, I, 150, 210; *Milinda*, 34ff; *Aṅguttara*, II, 149.

[2] *Saundarananda*, XVI, 94–98.

noble truths. There is suffering which is continuous and whose essence is affliction; there is the cause of suffering whose essence is origination; there is the destruction of suffering whose essence is escape, and there is the path to tranquillity whose essence is rescuing. [1] A man attains tranquillity and is not born again by understanding with his intellect the four noble truths, and penetrating to their core, he overcomes all the infections by the cultivation of meditation. [2] Birth is the cause of suffering. It is the root of the afflictions, old age, etc.; for as the earth is the place where all plants grow, so birth is the place where all calamities grow. As food, whether good or bad in itself, tends to destruction, not to the support of life, when mixed with poison; so all birth in this world, whether among animals or above or below, tends to suffering, not to pleasure. [3] As wind has its birthplace in the air, as fire lies in the womb of the *śamī* wood, as water lies inside the earth, so suffering has its birthplace in the mind and body. [4] The existence of the body involves suffering such as disease, old age, etc., and hunger, thirst, rain, heat and cold, etc., and the existence of the mind with its concomitants, when incorporated in matter, involves suffering such as grief, dejection, anger, fear, etc.[5] The cause of this suffering from active being (*bhava*) in this world is to be found in the category of the vices such as craving and the rest, not in a Creator or Primordial Matter or Time or the Nature of Things or Fate or Chance. [6] And for this reason it is to be known that the active being (*bhava*) of the world proceeds from the vices, so that those who are subject to passion and to mental darkness are subject to death and he who is devoid of them is not born again.[7] Therefore the causes of birth in its many forms are desire, etc., and so they must be eradicated in order to ensure freedom from suffering. The cessation of suffering proceeds from exhaustion of the cause. One should, therefore, render present for himself the holy, peaceful element, the refuge which is free from the passion of desire and brings suppression, the salvation which is eternal, unassailable, and holy. The means to attain salvation is the Path with its threefold wisdom and double tranquillity. It should be duly cultivated by the prudent man, governing himself by the pure threefold discipline.

By entering on this straight, noble, incorruptible Path with its three divisions and eight members, one eliminates the faults which are the causes of suffering and reaches the supremely blessed stage. In following it are required steadfastness, simple-mindedness, self-respect, heedfulness, and discrimination, desire for little, contentment and lack of attachment, patience and dislike of mundane activity. He who perceives suffering as it really is, its origin and its destruction, attains peace by the Noble Path and associates himself with the Aryans. One should, therefore, in the first instance, think of suffering as disease, in the second instance, of the faults as the cause of disease, thirdly of the destruction of suffering as good health, and fourthly of the Path as the medicine.

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1 *Saundarananda*, XVI, 4; cf. *Visuddhimagga* (P.T.S.), 495-496.
2 *Ibid.*, canto XVI, 4-5.
3 *Ibid.*, XVI, 7, 9.
4 *Ibid.*, II.
5 *Ibid.*, XVI, 11, 13.
6 *Ibid.*, XVI, 17.
7 *Ibid.*, 17-18.

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